

Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

AFTER SIX MONTHS— WHAT NOW ?

By Harry Pollitt

APRIL

1940

SIXPENCE

Deadlock War

TOM WINTRINGHAM

The author of *English Captain* analyses to-day's "strangest of all wars," and shows that modern developments not only in the art of war but in the structure of society make for a ruinous deadlock. His book, which is written for civilians, suggests the new tactics and social changes necessary to relieve the stalemate. 8s. 6d.

"Mr. Wintringham's book is invaluable. His historical deductions, if querulous, are also pungent and stimulating. His experience in Spain is more important still, and any number of tactical lessons can be deduced from it. His analysis of the blighting effect of modern industrialism—as a stout Socialist he naturally calls it 'Capitalism'—upon the art of warfare is interesting and illuminating. He is full of suggestions which may prove helpful."—*The Times*

FABER & FABER

THE ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL

A new quarterly journal containing articles and information on the scientific and cultural life of the U.S.S.R.

Edited by Dr. G. M. VEVERS

16 pages of illustrations. 2s. net

Annual Subs. 8s. post free

No. 1 published January 1940

Contents include :

The All-Union Agricultural
Exhibition, by D. Shillan
The Soviet Pavilion at the New
York World's Fair

Combating Drought
State and Collective Farms
Round the U.S.S.R., etc.

No. 2 ready April 15th

This Number will be on the Theatre, Cinema and Ballet and will contain many beautiful photographs

Subscription forms and full prospectus on application to :

LINDSAY DRUMMOND LIMITED

6/7 Buckingham Street, London, W.C.2

LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 22

APRIL 1940

NUMBER 4

Editor :

R. PALME DUTT

Contributing Editors :

LOUIS B. BOUDIN (U.S.A.)

GEORGE SELDES (U.S.A.)

STANLEY B. RYERSON (Canada)

GEORGE FINDLAY (South Africa)

GORDON CRANE (Australia)

ANGUS McLAGAN (New Zealand)

CONTENTS

	Page
The LABOUR MONTHLY Conference	194
Notes of the Month	195
<i>THE TURNING POINT OF THE WAR</i>	
<i>By R. P. D.</i>	
After Six Months—What Now?	208
<i>By HARRY POLLITT</i>	
The U.S.S.R., Turkey and the Allies	220
<i>By QUÆSTOR</i>	
Before the Labour Party Conference	229
<i>By ALLEN HUTT</i>	
Engineers Move into Action	236
<i>By ARTHUR EDGAR UPTON</i>	
An Outline of the Second Imperialist War	240
<i>By MAO TSE-TUNG</i>	
Document of the Month	249
Indian National Congress Resolution	
LABOUR MONTHLY Readers' Discussion Groups	250
Book Review	251
Philistine Gospel by ALLEN HUTT	

A

THE LABOUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

THE LABOUR MONTHLY Conferences Organising Committee has been active in a twofold task since the London Conference held at Holborn Hall on February 29.

Organisations represented at the Conference have been sent suggestions and material for extending the influence of the Conference, with the Conference Declaration as a basis. It is hoped to secure the endorsement of this Declaration by as many separate organisations as possible, with a view to a Recall Conference at a fairly early date.

The organisation of Conferences in the Provinces is being actively pursued. Definite steps are in hand for conferences in Cardiff, Newcastle, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds. Other towns are considering matters.

There should take place as soon as possible conferences in every part of the country. We appeal to every reader to consider his own town as the venue of a conference. Every possible assistance will be given by the Organising Committee. Enquiries should be sent to LABOUR MONTHLY, 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

The London Conference represented one-third of a million organised workers. It is practicable to envisage a large number of provincial conferences collectively representing 5 million workers. It is in the power of LABOUR MONTHLY readers to realise this conception and thereby achieve something of historic significance in the development of the struggle against the Second Imperialist War. We ask every reader to recognise the individual responsibility resting upon each one of us who understands the nature and grave potentialities of the present world situation to spread that understanding amongst the working masses so that their combined power to prevent immeasurable suffering may be aroused to action. At this stage conferences are the vitally necessary means to spread understanding. Our appeal for co-operation is to *every* one of our readers.

Bristol has led the way in doing this, and held a delegate conference on March 2, 1940, which was attended by 32 delegates including 20 from 10 trade union branches, 3 Labour Party organisations and 1 Co-operative Guild. There were also 128 visitors. The opening statement was made by R. Palme Dutt, and a resolution in similar terms to that passed at the London Conference was carried.

For news of Readers' Discussion Groups, see p. 250.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

*The Turning Point of the War—From Fiasco to Fiasco—
The Munich Gamble and the Finnish Gamble—Laski's Apolo-
gia—A Worshipper of Imperialist Decay—A Short History
of the War—Why the Finnish Gamble Broke Down—
Threats that Failed—Incendiaries Extinguished—Who
Won and Who Lost?—Peace Scares and Knock-out
Blows—To the Shambles—Europe as a Starvation
Spot—Peking and Mr. Keynes—The Bournemouth
Labour Party Conference*

THIS Spring has brought us to the turning point of the present war. Fateful issues and decisions stand before the people of this country and the peoples of the world. The ending of the war in the North, by the fall of the Mannerheim line, the collapse of the White Guard imperialist forces and the resolute opposition of all Scandinavia to the war manœuvres of Chamberlain and Daladier, is more than the ending of an episode in a region of Europe. It transforms the world situation. The loss of the Mannerheim line is the heaviest defeat of Western imperialism since the ending of the wars of intervention. It is a major blow to the war-plans of the Chamberlain-Daladier combination, and compels them to revise all their calculations. It shifts the balance of world forces. Every neutral plucks up courage from the example of Sweden to resist the warmongers. Italy seeks to take advantage of the position to dominate the situation in the South East. The American offensive associated with the Welles Mission is intensified. The question is brought up sharply for the British and French ruling classes: Whither now? What is the prospect of war? What new gamble, each more desperate than the last, can now be attempted? The defeatist current begins to reveal itself in sections of capitalist opinion in Britain and France. But the Chamberlain-Daladier régime is bound up with the war. The dominant war party presses for more violent and more reckless measures. Extend the war, open up new theatres of war, no more moral or juridical

scruples, no more gentlemanliness—these are the war cries of the British and French press, of the spokesmen of Western imperialism and their Labour echoes. The world trembles on the edge of the abyss, on the edge of an extending conflagration of unlimited all-destructive world war. This is the moment when the British and French peoples above all must say their word. The greatest responsibility rests on them. The working class and democratic forces need to face afresh the realities of the present world situation. Even those sections which at the outset may not have accepted the analysis of the war given in the columns of this journal from its outbreak cannot but accept the necessity to judge freshly the new facts of the present situation, where they are going, and the urgent necessity of action before it is too late.

EVERY plan and policy pursued by the ruling class of this country, under the leadership of the Chamberlain Government, has ended in one fiasco after another, for which the people have to pay an increasingly heavy price with their lives, their rights and their conditions of existence. The whole policy which led up to the present war was a fiasco without equal in the records of British diplomacy. The policy of those years, when all London society hung on the honeyed words of a Ribbentrop and worshipped at the shrine of St. Hitler, the policy of building up the strength of fascism and opening the gates to war, in the hope of promoting war against the Soviet Union, ended in the very fiasco which Stalin predicted. The foxes of British diplomacy, the decayed aristocrats, the multi-millionaires and world financiers were fooled and duped by the wine-merchant and the house-painter, precisely because these knew how to play on their supreme weakness—their fawning admiration for the lowest, most barbarous, dirtiest double-dealing reaction and frenzied hatred for anything progressive. The British aristocrats fawned on fascism as they had fawned on Tsarism before the last war. Thereby they landed their people and Europe in the present war.

WHEN to-day these same worshippers of reaction pour out their verbal fury against a Ribbentrop and a Hitler

for having betrayed them, they only reveal by their fury that their real policy and aims remain the same. The Finnish gamble was in reality the sequel of the Munich gamble, despite the apparent exact reversal of form ; the Finnish intervention the sequel of Spanish non-intervention ; the Finnish fiasco the sequel of the post-Munich fiasco, despite the difference of forms. They lash out in their fury against a Ribbentrop and a Hitler precisely because they are conscious of having been baited with their own secret aims, of having been fooled, not by their trust in noble professions, but by their own baseness. By their would-be exposures of the enemy they expose themselves. When Eden comes out in a recent speech at Liverpool on February 28 with his attack on Ribbentrop :

It is strange to think how many hours I used to spend in the Foreign Office listening to the present German Foreign Secretary, when he was Ambassador in London, and when he used to expound to me at no small length the dangers and horrors of Bolshevism

he may think that he is exposing Ribbentrop ; in reality he is exposing himself. He is exposing how he used to spend "many hours" at the Foreign Office. Neville Henderson, former Ambassador to Berlin, sent to put through Munich and the alliance with Hitler, writes his memoirs with gall to-day, and declares of Goering :

He was in fact a typical and brutal buccaneer . . . I must frankly say that I had a real personal liking for him.

Of course the crafty diplomat of dying reaction had a "real personal liking" for the "brutal buccaneer" Goering. And if to-day that would-be alliance has for the time gone astray the "real personal liking" is transferred to the "brutal buccaneer," Mannerheim.

IN a recent pamphlet issued as an official Labour apologia for the war and answer to socialist opponents, entitled "Is This an Imperialist War ?" the war advocate, H. J. Laski, searching for "socialist" arguments to cover Chamberlain's war, endeavours to argue that the war is between a "contracting imperialism" (Britain) and an "expanding imperialism" (Germany) and that therefore the British workers should support their own imperialism :

Although the war is a conflict between imperialisms, on the one side the combatants represent a contracting, on the other an expanding imperialism. If the expanding imperialism is successful, its very vigour makes it a consolidating imperialism, with all the strength that consolidation brings ; and this clearly makes it much more the enemy of Socialism than an imperialism which, like that of Great Britain, is already in process of disintegration. An expanding imperialism is bound to halt, a contracting imperialism is ever less able to halt, the progress of socialism within the society it controls (H. J. Laski, "Is This an Imperialist War ?" pp. 6-7).

The distinction is in reality as false as the conclusion. Every imperialism is by its nature aggressive and seeking extended domination. The fact that British imperialism, having annexed one quarter of the world is desperately concerned to maintain its domination against its advancing rivals, does not make it either progressive or satiated. This distinction between the main possessing imperialism and the challenging imperialism was also true of the last war between British and German imperialism (so that the argument becomes a retrospective justification of social chauvinism in the last war) ; but this did not prevent that British imperialism, having won the victory under the usual slogans of democracy and the rights of small nations, proceeded to annex another two million square miles of territory. The battle for world domination is without limit.

BUT the kernel of fact behind the casuistical argument points to the opposite conclusion. British imperialism is an imperialism in a highly advanced stage of decay : this is the kernel of fact behind the euphemism of a "contracting imperialism . . . in process of disintegration." Grossly inflated, swollen, over-ripe and ready for destruction, with possessions beyond its strength and challenged by new advancing rivals, it views with panic and hostility, not only every advancing rival, but every advance of socialism and democracy and popular awakening throughout the world. Gladstonian liberalism is replaced by Chamberlainism. So far from this decay being a progressive element, deserving the support of the working class, just this decay makes the old lion the more viciously reactionary. Therefore the British

ruling class is the leader of world reaction in the whole present era, the enemy of socialism throughout the world, the leader of the fight against the Soviet Union, and the supporter of reaction and fascism in every country (only coming into conflict with the German fascist régime at the moment when that fascist régime disappointed its hopes by establishing a basis of peaceful relations with the Socialist State). This reactionary rôle is continued in the present war. The conclusion for the British working class is thus exactly the opposite. Only by relentless struggle against this decaying imperialism can the British workers win emancipation. The policies of the reactionary ruling group are diametrically opposed to the interests of the British people, and can only bring ever greater disasters. Only in battle against this decaying imperialism, in unity with the French and German workers, with the colonial peoples of the Empire, and with the workers of the Socialist Soviet Union, the British workers can win freedom, peace and socialism.

THE British and French reactionaries got their war which their whole policy had in fact prepared, although not the war they had originally intended. Defeated in their aims of using German fascism for the purposes of anti-Soviet war, they plunged into the gamble of the present war. But their war is turning out as great a fiasco for them as their previous policy of appeasement. Imagining at the outset that the mere declaration of war would lead to a speedy change of course within German reaction and the "revolution of the Right" proclaimed by Duff-Cooper in his American tour, they plunged into the war without clear plan or strategy, as the outcome has shown, and concentrated far more attention on crushing the working class in France than on attacking the enemy. At the end of seven months the balance of forces is more unfavourable to them than at the outset, and the prospect of victory more remote. With far less resources than in 1914, they are spending far more than in 1914, to maintain a blockade which is far less effective. Torn by their contradictions, they sought to find a bridge to German reaction in order to switch the war into the channels of anti-Soviet war. But the fate of the

British agents sent to Holland for the purpose shows that their gullibility only led them once again into the trap. Defeated in this aim, they sought to break the deadlock of the war by opening up the Northern theatre of war against the Soviet Union. The most elaborate preparations were made ; arms and money were poured into Finland long before the opening of hostilities ; and armed expeditions were organised for the spring. But the speed of the victory of the Red Army, overturning all their calculations, the smashing through of the supposedly invulnerable Mannerheim Line, and the resistance of the Swedish and Norwegian, and finally also of the Finnish, peoples and Governments, in the face of extreme pressure and threats, against being dragged into the imperialist war, defeated all their plans. The Finnish adventure equally ended in a resounding fiasco. The whole question of the future strategy and development of the war is opened up afresh.

THE defeat of Western imperialism in Finland is a turning point of world history. Its significance stands out ever more clearly as the true facts of the moves on the imperialist side begin bit by bit to be revealed and to replace the fog of fantastic propaganda and fairy tales put out as a smokescreen by the servants of imperialism during the operations. It is not true that the Western Powers failed through being too hesitant, dilatory or scrupulous of neutral rights. It is now known that the preparations were actively carried forward during the summer and autumn before the hostilities began. The New York *World Telegram* reported that " Britain and France had sent \$40,000,000 worth of war supplies to Finland before Russia attacked her." General Sir Walter Kirke's visit had taken place in June, 1939, and at the conclusion of his review of the fortifications of the Mannerheim-Kirke line he had declared that " no army can break through this line." The preparations were set for the opening out of the new theatre of war in the spring. It was not considered possible that the Red Army could attempt a winter offensive, or, if it attempted it, could make any progress against the most heavily fortified line in Europe. For this reason it was not considered necessary to send troops before the spring.

This was General Mannerheim's own judgment:

After the League members had met at Geneva to condemn Russia and to promise the Finns the "material and humanitarian assistance that was in their power," Field-Marshal Mannerheim let it be known that his chief need then was for materials, not men. He had his own splendid Army, and in any case Westerners would not be of much use in the Arctic winter (*Times*, 15.3.40).

Even in January he still estimated that troops would only be needed by May :

Soon after the New Year Field-Marshal Mannerheim's Army was faced by heavier Soviet Armies, and he estimated that he would require an extra 30,000 men to take the field in May, after the late snows and the thaw (*Ibid*).

These calculations broke down only because the Red Army, by the offensive breaking through the Mannerheim Line in February-March, achieved what had been adjudged impossible by every military expert.

IT is also not true that the Western Powers failed to send their armed forces out of respect for Scandinavian neutrality. Here the political factor is no less important than the military. The French journalist, "Pertinax," has stated that the British and French representatives made clear that they were prepared to over-ride Scandinavian neutrality :

On March 1 the French and British representatives at Helsinki told M. Ryti, the Finnish Premier, and his colleagues, that their respective Governments were ready to send troops to Finland without delay as soon as they had received a direct appeal from the Finnish Cabinet for direct assistance. *The explanation was added that no opposition on the part of Norway and Sweden would be countenanced* ("Pertinax," in the *Daily Telegraph*, 14.3.40).

This is equally borne out by the statements in Daladier's speech to the French Chamber on March 12. Daladier stated that the Swedish and Norwegian Governments "in objecting to the passage of troops had even gone so far as to threaten to destroy the only railway line capable of supporting them." Such a threat could only arise in response to a direct threat to violate Swedish and Norwegian neutrality and send the troops without their consent. This statement of Daladier, which was followed by a direct incitement to the populations

of Sweden and Norway over the heads of their Governments, bears out the categorical testimony of "Pertinax."

THE sequence of dates, as so far divulged, is here important, for the openly incendiary rôle of British and French imperialism, and for its checking through the resistance, not only of the Swedish and Norwegian Governments, but of the Finnish Government. On February 5 the British-French Supreme War Council took the decisions for the dispatch of the Allied Expeditionary Force to Finland : and on February 26 the two forces of 50,000 were assembled and ready to depart. On February 25 the British and French representatives informed the Finnish Government that they were ready to dispatch the troops if the Finnish Government would make an appeal (Chamberlain in the House of Commons on Mar. 13). This was the first demand on the Finnish Government without result. On March 1 the British and French representatives made the formal intimation that they would send the troops without delay as soon as they received a direct appeal, and that no opposition from Sweden or Norway would be countenanced ("Pertinax" in the *Daily Telegraph*, March 14). This was the second attempt, still without result. On March 6 the Soviet-Finnish negotiations opened. British and French imperialism immediately moved to stronger measures to prevent peace. On March 7 the British and French Governments dispatched a Note to the Finnish Government that they were prepared to send troops if an appeal were sent, and added a threat if such an appeal were not sent :

A Note to the Finnish Government offering to put the force at the disposal of Finland had been sent to Helsinki on March 7 with a request that if the Finnish Government desired to accept the offer they should make a direct and open appeal for assistance. *At the same time the Note informed Finland that if the offer were not accepted the Allied Governments could not guarantee the restoration of Finland's territorial integrity after the war. (Daladier's speech in the French Chamber on March 12).*

This also proved ineffective. The Finnish Government preferred to negotiate. There followed finally the fourth attempt, the public declarations of Chamberlain in the House of Commons on March 11 and of Daladier in the French

Chamber on March 12. But on the evening of March 12 the Treaty was signed. The warmongers were defeated.

WHY did the Finnish Government resist the demands and even threats of British and French imperialism? The answer of Premier Ryti was explicit. To avoid being entangled in the imperialist war :

M. Ryti said that Allied help had not been asked for because this would certainly have meant that Finland would have been involved in the major war, the scene of which would then have been moved from the Western Front to Scandinavia (*Times*, 16.3.40).

With this may be compared the statement of "Pertinax" :

We must include among the motives which swayed the Finnish Cabinet a distinct apprehension lest through joining the Franco-British Alliance Finland might have to subordinate her own limited aims to its wider aims.

Thus a point was reached at which even the reactionary Finnish Government, fearing the pressure from below, and the growing division in the ranks of its supporters was compelled to recognise the divergence of Finnish interests from those of Western imperialism, under whose control it had entered into its reckless adventure. The war aims of Western imperialism to make Scandinavia a new theatre of war and open a full-scale anti-Soviet war in the Spring on the main basis of the Northern theatre of war were defeated. In the regretful words of "Scrutator" :

The war with Finland gave us the first chance of one military initiative which the peace has taken from us ("Scrutator," in the *Sunday Times*, 17.3.40).

The victory was not only a victory of the Finnish people and the Soviet Union against the Western imperialist warmongers. It was also a victory for the peoples of all countries against the extension of the war, and assisting the fight against the war in the West. At the same time, with the breaking of the Western imperialist hold on Finland as its war base, the way is opened for the political advance and liberation of the Finnish people.

THE outcome of these events has reopened the whole question of the war and its further development. On

the one side, renewed talk of peace sent a panic through the stock markets :

PEACE SCARE ON WALL STREET

A "peace scare" seized the New York Stock Exchange last night, causing considerable selling. Prices declined, especially in steel securities and the so-called "war securities" (*News Chronicle*, 16.3.40).

On the other side, the war-to-the-bitter-enders call loudly for more violence and a dynamic offensive. The aged fire-eaters of the pen on the *Temps* set the tune :

Henceforward the Entente must be everywhere, speak everywhere loudly and clearly, attack everywhere that attack is possible, recoil before no reasonable initiative, seek and find those battlefields which will permit them to deploy their immense military forces. The Entente must no more hesitate to dispel certain diplomatic fictions, to make war on all their enemies, to persuade neutrals that nothing, either juridically or morally, prevents a belligerent from having recourse to all the arms used by the adversary (*Temps*, 14.3.40).

The political storm in France and the fall of the Daladier Government is the sequel of this situation.

FROM the English side Sir Warren Fisher, entering his seventh decade after a pacific lifetime behind a Treasury desk, breathes fire and slaughter :

We must, if we were to deal with them (the Germans), temporarily put aside our traditional methods and give them hell in every sort of way It was fatal folly to take the line with these thugs that "no gentleman can do this." (Sir Warren Fisher, North Western Regional Commissioner, speech on March 15, *Times*, 16.3.40).

The Labour echo of imperialism, Herbert Morrison, with the striking unanimity of two hearts that beat as one, expressed the same thought on the same day :

We needed more vigour and liveliness We were acting as the Perfect Gentleman. It was a matter for consideration whether in the circumstances of to-day perfect gentlemanliness could win the victory (Herbert Morrison, speech on March 15, *Times*, 16.3.40).

The *Times* editorial delightedly approves the well-trained Labour leader :

Many people clearly find themselves in agreement with Mr. Herbert Morrison's remark that we need more vigour and

liveliness Public opinion would like above all things to see a more dynamic current running through the Franco-British effort (*Times* editorial, 18.3.40).

So in the last war in the closing months of 1916 the issue of the war trembled in the balance ; peace moves were in the air ; peace offensives were denounced ; and with the logic of war the advocates of the Knock-out Blow won the victory and led Europe to the shambles.

AMERICAN opinion expresses its expectation that the outcome will be a violent extension of the war, developing to world war :

The belief that “ all hell ” would break loose in Europe within the next two months was expressed by Mr. Kennedy, United States Ambassador to Britain, before he left by plane for Washington this afternoon. It is impossible to continue the present stalemate, he said. I believe that people at home in the belligerent nations, if nothing else, will force some kind of dramatic showdown in the spring (*Daily Telegraph*, 13.2.40).

A similar opinion was expressed by Admiral Stark, Chief of U.S. Naval Operations :

A general European war, followed by “ a world conflagration,” were threatened as a result of the present European situation and developments in the Far East.

This statement appeared in the evidence published to-day, given by Admiral H. B. Stark, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, at a secret session of the sub-committee of the House of Representatives, which is considering President Roosevelt's request for increased naval expenditure (*Daily Telegraph*, 14.2.40).

That the final outcome will make Europe “ a starvation spot ” is the prophecy of ex-President Hoover, giving evidence before the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee :

On the general European situation, as far as food supplies were concerned, Mr. Hoover was gloomy. I have no doubt that the whole of Europe will be a starvation spot after the war, he said, adding that the gravity of the relief problem was growing steadily (*Times*, 1.3.40).

This is the bright prospect—the “ new world after the war ” —which the advocates of the Knock-out Blow are preparing.

AFORETASTE of the future fate of warring capitalist Europe, if the madness is allowed to run its course,

is already afforded from the Far East, where the war has gone on longer:

PEKING, March 7.

The spotlight here has shifted from political affairs to the economic situation the serious and rapidly worsening food scarcity.

In spite of all efforts of the authorities, the dearth shows all signs of developing into a major tragedy, and it is a wonder that the Chinese people exist at all under the present conditions. According to the latest figures it costs a family in Peking twice as much as its monthly income to subsist on the meanest fare. . . . Already there have been demonstrations in Peking, which nearly turned into riots, among the crowds which gather each day outside the food shops. Groups of half-starving Chinese, including women and children, collect in the desperate hope of buying food, which is either being sold at exorbitant prices or is in the hands of unscrupulous hoarders (*Times*, 8.3.40).

Unthinkable in "civilised" Europe? Seven-and-a-half years ago "civilised" Europe equally turned a blind eye to the war which had already begun in China, and which it was then predicted would, if unchecked, spread to Europe. And indeed the Keynes Plan for the Organisation of Shortage has already shown how to proceed according to the best scientific principles along the downward slope.

THE Labour Party Conference which meets at Bournemouth next month has the responsibility to declare the policy of the mass of the organised British working-class movement in the face of this world catastrophe and the perspectives it opens up. It is a responsibility before the British people and before the international working class. The present course has led to the complete denial of socialism, at the very hour when the greatest crisis of capitalism calls for the strongest struggle for socialism; unity with Tory reaction and the embracing of the cause of imperialism in decay as a substitute for socialism; the crusade with the White Guards and Friends of Franco against the only country where socialism has been established; the assistance in the destruction of democracy in France and the sacrifice of the workers to the appetites of monopoly capital at home; the repudiation of everything for which the working-class movement has stood. The opposition to that course is already indicated in the majority of the resolutions on the agenda,

and especially in the host of resolutions against the political truce, which is the essential expression of the whole policy of unity with capitalism and war. It is of the greatest importance for the future that that opposition shall find clear voice and expression at the Conference, shall without hesitation and reserve proclaim, not only for the delegates, but for the masses outside, the path of international socialism in war-time, the condemnation of the betrayal by the leadership, the path of active struggle against the Government and the war and for the victory of the working-class and socialism. The numbers of these representatives may still be relatively few in the conditions of representation of this Conference and at this stage ; they may find their voice more easily heard at other conferences, closer to the workers in the factories, which may have less publicity and more power. But it is with these forces that the future lies ; and the speeding of their victory is the speeding of salvation for the tortured peoples of Europe and the world.

R. P. D.

DIALECTICS of NATURE

by **FREDERICK ENGELS**

Preface and Notes by J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S.

The first English Translation

Demy 8vo 15/- net 400 pp.

TWO SYSTEMS

by **EUGENE VARGA**

Two decades of Socialist and Capitalist economy compared

Demy 8vo 10/6 net 268 pp.

LAWRENCE & WISHART 2 PARTON ST.
LONDON, W.C.1

After Six Months— What Now ?

BY HARRY POLLITT

AT THE END of the first six months of what Chamberlain has described as “the strangest of all wars,” the ruling class and the working class of Britain are both faced with a series of extremely urgent and grave problems.

The aim of the ruling class, whatever phrases or slogans they use, is to gain at all costs the domination of Europe and the destruction of the Soviet Union, and to prepare the way for a gigantic trade war against their rivals, especially the United States of America—assuming that the present war ends with the capitalist system still in existence.

But the ruling class have to note certain facts—facts that also face the Labour Movement, and which could have an even greater significance for the Labour Movement were it not that the official Labour policy has at present caused a certain degree of paralysis amongst the masses.

In his speech some time ago at Manchester, Mr. Churchill stated that, with “God’s helping hand,” Britain was certain of victory. At the moment, however, the ruling class are showing a preference for more practical weapons than God’s helping hand. They have the B.B.C., the Press, the cinema, and the Labour leaders. Despite the fullest use of all these weapons, one fact emerges plainly for all to note and learn from. It is this. Do what they will, the ruling class cannot get the mass of the people to shout, sing, or wave flags for this imperialist war, any more than they can generate enthusiasm among the armed forces.

The war is being discussed as no other issue has ever been discussed in our lifetime, for it has brought many new and urgent problems into the homes and lives of the workers. Whether these discussions are on wages, prices, evacuation, the neglect of children’s education, the conduct of the war ; the contrast between the war on the Western Front and the war on the high seas ; the contrast between Britain’s attitude towards Poland in the first weeks of the war and its policy of immediate support to Finland ; always there is present an under-current of awareness that something is wrong somewhere.

It is not easy for workers to see precisely what is wrong, to put their fingers on the cause of their disquiet, but the uneasiness is there. They are not worried because all is quiet on the Western Front, or that lives are not being lost on land as well as on sea, or that bombing

has not taken place. At bottom it is political disquiet, uneasiness regarding the aims, leadership and whole policy of the Chamberlain Government and of the Labour leaders.

There are also, of course, illusions amongst the workers, the most widely held being that this is a war against fascism and that for that reason it is necessary to continue the war. Others believe it is going to be the same sort of war for them as the last one, with plenty of work, overtime, week-ends, and comparatively high earnings. Others still believe that the war may lead to "better times" or to some sort of "new world," but these last two currents do not represent the main current of political feeling amongst the mass of the workers.

But it is not accidental that the principal cause of uneasiness among the core of the labour movement, that is in the ranks of the loyal labour men and women, is the political truce, or as it is now the fashion to call it, the "standstill agreement" that has been reached between the Labour leaders and Chamberlain. This truce has produced exactly the opposite effect to that which was intended. It has aroused suspicion amongst the workers, and this will be considerably deepened now that Chamberlain feels he has got official Labour so hamstrung that he can insolently turn down their suggestion that the Trades Disputes Act should be amended.

The very fact that this can be done by a Government, which Arthur Greenwood, M.P., declared early in the war could not remain in power a single day without the support of the Labour Party, shows two things. First, that the political truce has strengthened the position of Chamberlain at home, and he knows it, and takes full advantage of it. Secondly, that vital time has been lost by not organising the mass movement for active opposition to the war by the paralysis imposed on the movement by official labour policy. It also reveals that this Act is not a dead letter, but one of the strongest weapons in the armoury of the Chamberlain government for fighting labour when once it is roused to take mass action to fight against the imperialist war on their wages, lives and homes.

In all activities to win the masses for action against the war and official Labour Party policy, it is necessary to explain time and time again the fact that the present war is the principal responsibility of the very government which the Labour leaders keep in power.

For six-and-a-half years the Chamberlain Government helped Hitler with money, arms, and political support. They backed up everything he did in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Spain. They agreed with his attacks on the German labour movement. They smashed up the League of Nations; they refused to sign a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union; they prevented the building up of a Peace Front that could have made this war impossible; they forced Poland to refuse any help from the Soviet Union to prevent that country from being invaded. They did all this, to build Hitler's war machine

B

so that he would go and fight against the Soviet Union.

"Oh yes," some workers say, "we agree with you in all that, but now Chamberlain wants to fight Hitler, surely we should help him to do this?"

This is not the case. This is a misunderstanding of the true position.

When the might of the Soviet Union compelled Hitler to make a pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Union, the Chamberlain Government then declared war on Nazi Germany, *not to crush fascism*, but to extend its own domination in Europe, strengthen the conquests of the British Empire, and find other means through which it could also continue its anti-Soviet policy. Just as Poland became the pawn in the first move, so Finland became the pawn in the new move against the Soviet Union.

The fundamental cause of my own mistake at the beginning of the war is that I did not see this in time, and did not realise that with the signing of the Soviet-German Pact an entirely new international situation had opened up, which meant that the old policy of seeking to bring about a Peace Front in which the Chamberlain Government would participate was now impossible of realisation.

Once war was declared it became for British Imperialism a war to the bitter end—a war against the forces that for the first time in the long history of British imperialism have completely out-manceuvred them.

It was easy for the Chamberlain Government to get support for their war at the beginning, because of the deep hatred that was felt throughout the whole labour movement against fascism. This played a part in my own case in not enabling me to see the fundamental change in the international situation that I have referred to a little earlier. But there was one mistake that we never did make even in the first days of the war, and that was to believe that the Chamberlain Government would be, or could ever be, the instrument through which fascism would be fought or crushed.

I notice now, when my pamphlet written in the first days of the war is being so lavishly quoted from official labour platforms and its press, that they never, never quote the part that deals precisely with this political point. But the fundamental analysis of that pamphlet was wrong, as I have openly stated on every public platform on which I have appeared, and if there was one thing that proves above all else that it was wrong, it is the fact that the labour leaders, the *Daily Herald* and especially Professor Laski approve of it.

It needed only a few weeks to prove that so far from being an anti-fascist war, this war was even more blatantly imperialist than the last. In any mention of war aims the word fascism has completely disappeared from the language of Tory, Liberal and Labour leader alike. The open flirtation to bring Italian fascism on the side of British and French "democracy"; the flirtation with Japanese militarism to

bring it on the side of the “democracies”; the shameless efforts not to limit slaughter but to extend it by bringing every kind of unprincipled pressure on neutral countries to come in on the side of the “democracies”; the efforts behind the scenes to reach agreement with certain leaders of the Nazi Party to do a deal behind Hitler’s back, without any intention of crushing fascism, but in order to reach an agreement that would switch the war in the West to a united war against the Soviet Union; the refusal to grant India its independence; the refusal to end the partition of Ireland; the refusal to publish the Royal Commission’s Report on the West Indies; while at the same time Daladier was doing more in days to impose Hitlerism on the French workers than Hitler had been able to do in months when he first came to power; the political truce in Britain; the suspension of local elections; the emergency legislation giving absolutely dictatorial powers to the most reactionary government that Britain has had for a century, have all helped to expose the real aims of this imperialist war.

It was on the question of Finland, however, that the ruling class were too clever by half. They have shown their hand too openly for the dirt not to be clearly seen. They were too quick to sing of “their” victory. They were too eager to send war materials, men and money to Finland, when they had refused all these things to Republican Spain when it was fighting a real war against fascism. They were too ready to call together “their” League of Nations to expel the Soviet Union, and to give help to Finland, when they had previously prevented the same League from helping Republican Spain, or allowing it to be called together to discuss the outbreak of war in 1939.

Every time any move is made for peace, it is Britain that leads the offensive against peace. When the negotiations opened between the Soviet Union and Finland, it was Britain which led the most rabid fight to urge Finland to refuse to conclude any form of peace negotiations with the Soviet Union, by the most open and shameless intimidation, covered over with lavish promises of men, arms and money.

It was Britain which by its opposition to a peaceful outcome of the Finnish question laid millions open to slaughter in France, because peace in Finland at once raises the issue in a sharper form than ever before, why not peace in France?

It is British imperialism that is the pace-maker for extending the war, for embroiling the neutral countries, for egging on other countries against the Soviet Union. It seeks by any and every means to find new forms to help in the war against Germany in the West, and against the Soviet Union in the East.

It is being diplomatically defeated and out-maneuvred again and again, and this position has two sides to it. First, it only serves to make British imperialism more reckless and aggressive in its war aims; secondly, it shows the strong position of those who fight the imperialist

war, and this alongside the power of the Soviet Union, which has so completely spiked the guns of British imperialism, means that the peace forces have been greatly strengthened.

This is the basic reason why Britain has so fiercely opposed any suggestion of a peaceful settlement of the Finnish question. It wanted the war in Finland to go on, because this would help it in its efforts to attack the Soviet Union through the countries in the Near East.

Now that the question of Finland has been settled in the teeth of the opposition of British and French Imperialism, it would be a profound mistake to believe that Britain will give up its efforts to crush its trade rivals in Germany or will ease in any way its efforts to crush the Soviet Union.

It is not so easy to switch the war against the Soviet Union as is sometimes pictured. While undoubtedly there are powerful forces working for this aim in all the belligerent countries, we need to remember that the contradictions between German and British imperialism have gone too deep and too far to permit of any immediate calling-off of the war in the West, when the revolutionary movement of the masses has also not yet reached the point of development where it can basically affect the policy of the present rulers of these countries. At the same time, it needs to be remembered that it is one thing to get the support of the British people for a war which they still think is against fascism, and another to get that support for a war against the Soviet Union.

British Imperialism with the cunning of centuries of experience behind it, on the basis of its traditional policy of divide and rule, will still try, despite its present diplomatic defeats, to get others to pull its chestnuts out of the fire. They will, even whilst intensifying the struggle against Germany, and all the frightful suffering and slaughter that this policy involves, still try and find other ways and means of carrying out the same tactics as they have used in the case of Finland. For every time a door is closed to them through which the Soviet Union may be attacked, this only gives added urgency to them in trying to force other remaining doors. This is why workers' vigilance should not for a single moment be relaxed, and why they need keep a watchful and vigilant eye on Turkey, Irak, Iran and Afghanistan.

It is in this light that the moods of the masses have to be considered. It is this which gives such importance to their disquiet, their concern and their political discussions.

There is on the surface an apparent political silence. But it is an ominous silence. Behind it are feelings that can be organised for mass action against the whole policy of the Chamberlain Government, and the entire capitalist system.

Once the working class can rid itself of some of the present illusions, of the deadening hand of the official leadership, then a really mighty

mass movement is going to sweep all before it despite all the obstacles that may be placed in the way. For there is a deep gulf between the feelings of the rank and file of the labour movement and the leadership of that movement.

It is to get this mass movement into speedy action that is the heart of the political situation in Britain to-day, and from it arise the heavy tasks that face not only revolutionary workers but all thoughtful labour men and women as well.

There needs to be widespread explanatory propaganda to convince the people that the ruling class mean business, that they are fighting for the maintenance of their system, that they are not going to hesitate to spend millions both of money and of precious workers' lives, and impose terrible burdens on the workers in their efforts to realise their aims.

The workers must be shown that if the plans of the British imperialists are allowed to mature, this will be a long and bloody struggle with an aftermath far worse than last time. The workers must be shown that the efforts to force down their standards of living to pay the cost of the war, and to drive up exports, are meant to become a permanent feature of working-class life, so that at the end of this war the trade war now being carried on, especially against America, can be intensified. The day the military war ends, the trade war for the domination of the world market will begin and every slogan being used to win the military struggle will then be replaced by new ones to the effect that if Britain is to live "she must win the peace as well as the war."

Any illusions that what happened in the last war for certain sections of the workers is going to be repeated in this war need to be smashed down right now. Unless the workers fight back, and fight back now, they are going to see their standards reduced to a level that may appear unthinkable. No light and airy talk about "the workers will never stand for this" will suffice if there is no class struggle to make certain now it is not going to happen. The ruling class mean business, and they do not hide this fact, as the speeches of their responsible spokesmen go to prove.

There is not a worker in France who, a year ago, would not have laughed at you if you had suggested his working and living conditions would be reduced to the low level they are at now.

The ruling class have powerful allies in the Attlees and Citrines, and these in turn are assisted by the so-called "left" in the labour movement who support the war, but pretend that they are against the workers having to make heavy sacrifices to help pay for the war. The blunt truth is that if you support the present war, sooner or later you reach the position, whatever phrases you use, where you are forced to support the methods by which the ruling class is carrying on the war.

The propaganda coming from this "left," the Bevan, Laski and

Strauss group, for a Labour Government to come to power is only moonshine and desertion of the masses so far as it suggests that the aim of such a Government would be to fight against war and capitalism. They only want a Labour Government that will conduct the imperialist war "more efficiently," and to damp down any genuine revolutionary movement for the ending of war and capitalism.

Their type of propaganda is useful to the Chamberlain Government in, at a later stage of the war, taking selected safe labour leaders into the Government to damp down the rising discontent of the workers.

There is urgent need for more fundamental socialist propaganda on what imperialism means—the struggle for markets, for profits, for new territory and sources of raw materials, for cheap labour ; how for a time these issues are settled by diplomatic and trading agreements, but that sooner or later a point is reached where the trading and diplomatic struggle gives place to a bloody struggle called war.

There is need to recall time and time again the fact that the Soviet Union is as yet the one Socialist country in the world, and that it is surrounded by hostile capitalist states ; that the class enemy never gives up the struggle to crush the Soviet Union in peace time, and that it becomes more urgent to crush it in war time, when the revolutionary example of the first Socialist State in the world gains more and more influence amongst the more thoughtful section of the working class.

There is need to recall all the old slogans of the last war, unknown to millions who are now grown to manhood and being conscripted into the armed forces and industry—the slogans such as "The war to end war," "Hang the Kaiser," "Independence of Small Nations," "England Fit for Heroes to Live In," "No Territorial Aims"—and to show how they are all being used again with hardly a change in the wording ; to recall the lying propaganda about the atrocities of the enemy, the faked war photographs, the wanton slaughter of millions by the Generals who, too late for their victims to be saved, were sacked, censured or exposed.

We need to remind the present generation and their elders of the aftermath of the last war, the trade depression, wage cuts, unemployment, reduced unemployment benefits and pensions ; how Britain has become a land fit for the Means Test to be applied in, yesterday to unemployment benefits, to-day to old age pensions, to-morrow to workmen's compensation and wages.

Above all we should tirelessly encourage and help develop the idea that the workers must end the capitalist system, which is the cause of all their poverty and unemployment, and which twice in our lifetime has dared to send them to the shambles of war.

To do this means far more effective propaganda on the question of what we mean by ending the war. We Communists will support every mass movement for peace, and encourage the development

of every anti-war movement, knowing that this can lead to the growth of the idea of the defeat of capitalism, through which alone a real and lasting peace can be obtained. While working alongside all who strive for peace now, we have to show clearly and frankly that when once the war machines of the imperialist states have been unleashed, only the rising mass movement of the workers against the war, its effects, and the ruling class, can give any effective guarantee of peace.

We can never be parties to deceiving the workers about the kind of peace that will be made while capitalism is in existence. All talk of a durable and lasting peace, all talk of an honourable peace, of a new world after the war, of a peace with no annexations, indemnities or territorial gains by the victorious powers is a sham and a fraud.

It is this which makes the Labour Party Peace Aims Programme such a deceitful and shameful document, for apart from the fact that the only way through which a really lasting and honourable peace can be obtained is by the ending of the capitalist system, which is only possible by the development of the very revolutionary movement that the Labour Party is trying to prevent by every means in its power, these so-called Peace Aims contain proposals that strengthen imperialism and deny the right of independence to the colonial peoples.

Only by the German, French and British workers strengthening their mass movement to the point where they can end the rule of the Hitlers, Daladiers and Chamberlains, and the system they represent, is there any guarantee of a Peace that represents a victory for the workers of all these countries and the defeat of all their class enemies.

This is why now as never before more international propaganda is needed. The slogan of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels "Workers of the World Unite. You have Nothing to Lose but your Chains, You have a World to Win" has to-day a deeper significance than ever before. It was never meant to mean unite to kill each other, but to unite alongside each other to end capitalism.

Fear that this will happen, fear of the spread of Communism, is now dominant in the minds of the warmongers of Germany, Britain and France alike.

This explains the attacks on the Soviet Union and on the Communist Parties all over the world—for the spectre of Communism does haunt the ruling class, especially in war time, in which, as all history shows, revolutionary movements do tend to develop and, as in the case of the last war, mature to the point where they can overthrow Czarism. The last war led also to the rise of powerful revolutionary movements in a number of other important countries that were involved in that war, and these helped to end it.

For years the Communist International has declared that the present age is one of wars and revolutions. Never was this so true as at the present time. Every event taking place only serves to emphasise the accuracy of this analysis.

To-day is the testing time for every man and woman in the labour movement. For all it is now no longer a question of standing aside, but of taking sides. There can be no half-way house, no easy course. It is the question which side of the fight are you on, that present history puts to us all—the side of the working class in its struggle to end the war and capitalism, or the side of the ruling class in its prosecution of the war, the crushing of the labour movement and the whole future of mass misery, unemployment and new wars.

The policy of the Labour leaders, of reformism, leads not to peace and socialism, but to an imperialist revenge, travestied by the name “peace”; an imperialist peace treaty, which will bear within itself the seeds of future wars, different only from Versailles in that the struggle for the domination of the world market will be so severe with the growth of monopoly control and of the productive forces through new developments during the war, that the breathing space between the end of the present war and the beginning of a new world war will be much shorter than between 1918 and 1939.

Or the path of Communism. Not an easy path. Full of fights, struggle, and persecution, fighting against the stream, against popular illusions, against war hysteria and spirit of revenge, facing every foul slander and calumny that a ruthless class enemy and the labour leaders in its service can bring into use. But victory is certain at the end. Workers’ power is certain at the end. A real and lasting peace on the basis of a socialist economy is certain at the end.

Those who say “it cannot be done,” or “we have to wait until the war is over,” are not only taking up a cowardly attitude, they are helping the Chamberlain Government and reactionary labour leaders to strengthen their position and thus make it easier for the imposition of Hitlerism on the British working class and making the future struggle of the workers far harder and more difficult than they are now. For every day that is lost in not fighting now a bitter price will have to be paid in the near future.

Here we are in Britain boasting that we have one of the most powerful labour movements in the world, boasting of our education, our political understanding, our class consciousness, and yet we are a thousand miles behind our Indian comrades in fighting spirit and militancy. Why, they put us to shame by the magnificence of their fighting capacity and solidarity. We are content to be fobbed off by wage advances that fall far behind the rise in the cost of living, or the promise of a new world after the war is over, but the Indian textile workers and railwaymen are striking to improve their conditions, and this is how to fight also against the war. The workers in Cyprus and the West Indies too are conducting mass struggles against British Imperialism. It is high time the same kind of struggle was organised in Britain.

The fight against war cannot be conducted in the abstract, it must be a concrete fight for concrete things. That is why the ruling class

give an inch now, to fob us off, and then to-morrow they will take a yard. Let the British workers be made aware of the danger they are in, that everything they have won from the ruling class, every gain of the past, every hope for the future, is now at stake. It is not in peril from Hitler. It is in peril from Chamberlain. The German and French workers are fighting back against their own real enemies. We must fight back against ours.

This is why if May Day, the day of international solidarity, has any message for us at all, we shall aim to make it a landmark in the age-long struggle against capitalism ; that the workers will leave the factories, that they will come on the streets, assert their right to demonstrate for all their immediate demands, and against the imperialist war. The ruling class compel the members of the armed forces to parade the streets to whip up enthusiasm for their war ; the workers must assert their right to demonstrate for peace and socialism. Gigantic May Day demonstrations in Britain could give a lead to the workers of all lands now involved in this imperialist war. *Not on the first Sunday in May, but on the first day of May.* The workers' day, the day when for fifty-one years workers of all lands have pledged their common solidarity, their faith in Socialism, their call for international unity, and if ever the call for international unity was necessary to echo over all the frontiers, it is now—the call for solidarity in life for a fuller life, not in death to reap profits for a handful of British, German and French millionaires.

That is why the question of unity of action must be raised. All the forces opposed to war and imperialism have now the urgent duty of finding the way to such agreement as to how the whole of their efforts, organisations and power can now be exerted in a single direction. There are many difficulties to be overcome, many prejudices and suspicions to be removed ; but the urgency of the position should be the overriding consideration in the thoughts of all who are able to influence and lead the work of such organisations.

But it is inside the labour movement itself that the first drive should be organised. For once the mass movement begins to develop here, it will soon begin to influence all other types of organisations who are opposed to the war. It will at the same time produce its effect among the workers in the armed forces. It is a fact of tremendous political significance that for the first time there are now in the British armed forces tens of thousands of class-conscious, politically educated workers, who are in a position to explain the political situation and the class struggle to the rest of their comrades.

The policy of the labour leaders must be repudiated by action, by mass demonstrations, breaking through every form of the political truce. It was done in the last war, it can be done in this.

The first blows have to be struck in the factories and trade unions. There must be established the will for action and forms of organisation

that will make the mass movement indestructible—the strengthening of workshop organisation, the election of shop stewards for every grade of industry, linked up on a factory, district and national basis, backed by the local, district and national trade union organisations ; the strengthening of the trade unions, not only by a 100 per cent. membership, but by full attendance at trade union branch meetings, by ensuring the carrying out of all normal trade union branch procedure, conferences, democratic election of officials, and firm opposition to every attempt to use the war as the excuse for placing dictatorial powers in the hands of the trade union executive committees.

If such activity were generated it would not be long before the political truce was smashed. For the feeling against this grows every day, for more and more it is being realised that it not only applies to parliamentary by-elections, but serves to dampen down the struggle on the industrial field.

Alongside these activities should go the drive for the strengthening of the local trades councils as well as the federation of trades councils, so that they not only reflect more closely the demands of the workers in the factories and affiliated trade unions, but become the local unifying centres of the workers' struggles.

Develop the tenants' associations, and every other form of mass movement which brings the workers together in defence of their rights and conditions.

Seek by every means to increase the power and organisations of the Co-operative Movement, in which there is not only a traditional anti-war movement, but which can be one of the most effective class weapons against monopoly capitalism.

Above all, while carrying out all these types of activities, it is necessary to intensify revolutionary propaganda against capitalism as a whole, to deepen class consciousness and political understanding.

The masses are serious-minded as never before. They are thinking, they are eager to know, to read and study, to have things explained to them. This is a situation of great possibilities, if only the militant section of the working class will but realise it.

Since the last war Marxist education has enormously increased. There are to-day in the factories tens of thousands of revolutionary workers who are able to explain and show the way forward. Inside the armed forces are the same types of workers. None of these can be led astray by imperialist propaganda, they are the steel framework around which the working class must now build up a mass structure.

On these workers in particular is a great responsibility. From them can come the drive, the leadership that can lead the whole mass movement forward to a new level of class activity and initiative. If they do their part, they can be sure that the workers of France and Germany will not lag behind.

We believe that if the policy that has been outlined here is now

vigorously taken up in every factory, trade union and local Labour Party branch, Co-operative guild and labour exchange, then we shall soon see the beginnings of a gigantic mass movement of solidarity and struggle against the whole policy of the Chamberlain Government, war and capitalism.

If it is made the central point in all the preparations to make May Day, 1940 a real workers' day of demonstrations of their unity and solidarity, then the coming annual conference of the Labour Party in Bournemouth at the end of May can become quite a different kind of conference from what the labour leaders are banking upon.

For them it is to be a war conference, a conference of support to the Chamberlain Government in carrying on the war, a conference of hostility against the Soviet Union. But there is time to change all this, if the serious-minded section of the labour rank and file will but organise and fight to bring this about.

The Bournemouth Conference can be made to mark the end of the political truce, the end of collaboration with Chamberlain in his war policy ; it can be made to end the terrible position where the Labour Party under its present leadership has become the chief war party in Britain, which means it has surrendered Socialist principles, theory and practice.

We know there are obstacles and difficulties in the way. The workers can surmount them. They can clear out the reactionary leaders, they can change the policy of the Labour Party, they can once more develop that type of working-class activity that will allow the whole labour movement to be guided and led in the fighting spirit, the unity and singleness of purpose and aim that animated the pioneers of the movement, when for them the slogan "Workers of the World Unite" was not a platform peroration in peace time, but the guide to action in every phase of the struggle against capitalism and war.

The U.S.S.R., Turkey and the Allies

BY QUÆSTOR

THE WAR IN Finland has ended in discomfiture for Mr. Chamberlain. All his plans were laid on the basis of the war dragging out until May, when the Allies could attack the U.S.S.R. with convenience to themselves. That is the truth behind the *Times* uneasy doubts whether the Allies acted quickly enough. At all events, Mr. Chamberlain has not secured his "new front" in the North, and with it the chance of switching the war against the U.S.S.R. The Red Army—that "exploded myth," that "colossus with feet of clay"—has settled the hash of Mr. Chamberlain's schemes. Naturally, he and his henchmen are looking elsewhere.

Here is their authentic voice—that of Mr. Ward Price, prince of appeasement publicists, voice of Chamberlainism in all the capitals of Europe before the war (save one), and lately a welcome guest among the highest Nazi leaders. Mr. Price wrote in the *Daily Mail* on March 14:

The Scandinavian gate to Central Europe, which for three months has been ajar, is now fast-closed again. By so much the more is the importance of the other open enemy flank in South-Eastern Europe increased.

Our defensive alliance with Turkey is constantly being strengthened by personal contacts. At the present moment an important Anglo-French Air Mission is in the Turkish capital.

If Russia should ever make that alliance operative by taking the offensive against Rumania, Iran or any other of her southern neighbours, we are well placed to deliver a dangerous thrust at those Caucasian oilfields which are as vital a spot to Germany as to Russia herself.

But Mr. Price is too modest in suggesting that the half-million French and British troops in the Near East, with their complement of aeroplanes, tanks and attendant warships, must wait until the Soviet Union "takes the offensive." The plans of his leaders are much more vigorous. Thus Mr. Gordon Lennox, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, and as well-informed a writer on British foreign policy as any habitué of the upper circles of the Foreign Office, wrote the same day that the British Government regards the U.S.S.R. as an ally of Germany, but does not necessarily intend to declare war, which is no longer fashionable. It "may well feel justified at some stage in the campaign in considering that a blow against Russia would be a blow against Germany." For this purpose, the oil supply in Trans-Caucasia is one of the "obvious points of vital strategic interest."

The leader-writer of "Great Britain and the East"—the self-constituted but none the less faithful echo of the India Office and the Colonial Office—echoed the very same sentiments, also on March 14 : "Indeed, there are possibilities more remote from the field of practicable considerations than that the Allies, with the aid of Turkey, might elect to strike in that area (the Caucasus oil-fields) if Russian demands on Finland should prove intolerable." As we know, the Russian demands proved even worse—they proved successful ; and no greater "provocation" to aggressive imperialism could be imagined than the success in war of a Socialist State.

It would be wrong, however, to attribute the threats in the Chamberlain press to the galling sense of defeat in Finland which the War Cabinet must undoubtedly be feeling. There is ample evidence to show that the Near East, as a theatre of war, was in the minds of the British and French Governments months ago. And not merely from the angle of the defence of Rumania against a German attack, under the Franco-Rumanian Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the British guarantee of April 13, 1939—which was the ostensible reason for the assembling of General Weygand's huge army in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. A still more eloquent piece of evidence is that given by the well-known French reactionary journalist, Jules Sauerwein, in an article in the *Sunday Times* of January 21, beginning with these words :

Since the beginning of hostilities two long journeys have led me, first to the Baltic coast and then to the East Mediterranean. The purpose of these investigations was to find out whether hostilities, paralysed on the Franco-British front by powerful fortifications, had any chance of extending to the neutral sphere of the North, or in the Near East.

From internal evidence, it is clear that these journeys began early in October, long before the Soviet-Finnish negotiations reached their crisis. Moreover, M. Sauerwein said very little in his article of any danger from Germany in the two neutral regions. His emphasis fell entirely on "Russian aggression," "Bolshevik infiltration," "Bolshevik propaganda."

It should be added that M. Sauerwein, formerly foreign editor of the *Matin*—beloved of the treasuries of imperial Russia and imperial Germany long before propaganda ministries were invented—and now foreign editor of the million-sale *Paris Soir*—yellowest of the yellow French press—is renowned in much the same way that Mr. Ward Price is renowned : a keen sense of news, widespread acquaintance among the great, and the instinct for never straying far from the foreign policies of the most reactionary and most anti-Soviet elements among the ruling class of his own country. This makes attention to M. Sauerwein's writings not a mere tribute to his journalistic talents, but an infallible guide to the paths of the anti-Soviet aggressors.

It is more than a coincidence that, at the same time as M. Sauerwein was beginning his travels, negotiators from Finland and Turkey were

preparing to visit Moscow. The outcome of the Finnish negotiations has overshadowed that of the Turkish—so far. The latter will not prove less important, if the anti-Soviet warmakers are able to put into effect the plans discussed by Messrs. Ward Price, Gordon Lennox and Sauerwein.

What in essence was the cause for the breakdown of the negotiations carried on in Moscow, from October 1 to October 17, by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Sarajoglu ? The veil has not been lifted in its entirety, but from the scraps which appeared in the most authoritative British, French and Soviet newspapers it is quite clear what was the main point. On the one hand, Turkey had secured a pledge of mutual assistance from Great Britain and France. M. Sarajoglu therefore insisted that any pact of mutual aid between Turkey and the U.S.S.R. should leave Turkey free to stand on one side, as a neutral, if Great Britain and France were involved in war with the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there was the possibility that Germany might attack Rumania, which Turkey was bound to defend (bound by interest as well as by the obligations of the Balkan Entente) and which Britain and France were also bound to defend. M. Sarajoglu therefore demanded that the U.S.S.R. should pledge itself to come to Turkey's assistance in that case. He wanted, in short, to win both on the swings *and* on the roundabouts.

The position of the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, was simple and logical. If the Turkish Government had a reservation in promising assistance to the U.S.S.R. against an aggressor, so had the Soviet Government. If Turkey was willing to pledge its support to the Soviet Union against all comers except Great Britain and France, then the Soviet Union must take leave to do likewise, and promise support for Turkey against all comers except Germany. What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. The fact that the Turkish Government, in its subsequent treaty of alliance with Great Britain and France (October 19), made the reservation that it *might* stand aside in a war of Britain and France against the U.S.S.R. did not in any way improve matters, since the reservation meant that Turkey might equally well join in the attack—as the latest and most authoritative publicists of the National Government, quoted above, now seem to expect.

The importance of these abortive negotiations in October between Turkey and the U.S.S.R. and of the more successful negotiations between Turkey and the Allies does not, of course, lie in the legal technicalities providing a loophole for Turkey. The very fact that Turkey sought such a loophole, thereby immensely encouraging the imperialist plans for war on the Soviet Union which suffered a reverse in the Soviet-German pact of August 23, 1939, is the important fact. As Molotov said in his speech to the Supreme Soviet on October 31 :

The Soviet-Turkish negotiations did not lead to the conclusion of a pact, but they did help us to clear up, or at least explore, a number of

political questions that interest us. In the present international situation, it is particularly important to know the true face and policy of States relations with which are of serious importance. Many things pertaining to the policy of Turkey have now become clearer to us, both as a result of the Moscow negotiations and as a result of recent acts of the Turkish Government in the sphere of foreign policy.

As you know, the government of Turkey has preferred to tie up its destinies with a definite group of European Powers, belligerents in the present war. It has concluded a pact of mutual assistance with Great Britain and France, who for the past two months have been waging war on Germany. Turkey has definitely discarded the cautious policy of neutrality and has entered the orbit of the developing European war. This is highly pleasing to both Great Britain and France, who are bent upon drawing as many neutral countries as possible into their sphere of war. Whether Turkey will not come to regret it, we shall not try to guess. It is only incumbent on us to take note of these new factors in the foreign policy of our neighbour, and to keep a watchful eye on the development of events.

What induced the Turkish Government to change its policy from that cautious position which was noted in the first of this series of reviews, in the October issue of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*? Not merely the growing measure of financial inducement received from British imperialism—the £3,000,000 advanced for the construction of a metallurgical combine at Karabuk in 1936, the £16,000,000 advanced in cash or provided in credit for armaments and industrial equipment in 1938, the £40,000,000 of credits and gold provided by the Allies in October, 1939—although to secure in a space of twelve months a sum approaching that of the total Turkish Budget must surely be a transaction unique in the history of international—shall we say, “inducement.” The question is, how did the Turkish Government reach such a point of accessibility?

The fact is that the independent capitalist development of Turkey which was made possible by the post-war revolution and the successful War of Independence of 1919 to 1922 has led to the creation of a new national bourgeoisie which was partly already interested in links of all kinds with foreign capital. There were 106 limited companies, with a capital of 1,669,000 Turkish pounds, founded before 1923, and 196, with a capital of 158,000,000 Turkish pounds, founded in the next ten years. There was a corresponding increase in the number of factories; of 1,397 factories and workshops open in 1933, 340 only had existed before 1923, while the rest had been founded since. These figures show the gradual development of a native class of industrial capitalists, sufficiently strong to begin to affect policy, and sufficiently weak to be accessible to the blandishments and mighty financial resources of great foreign Empires. This was assisted by the fact that, for all the anti-imperialist character of the peasant uprising which was the backbone of the War of Independence, foreign capital had still a powerful influence in the country—a significant feature being a big increase of its rôle in industry and mining, compared with the previous

main spheres of penetration of foreign capital in Turkey—railways and banks. This is illustrated by the following figures, taken from the official publications of the Turkish Government itself:

Foreign Capital in £T millions:

<i>Invested in:</i>	1924	1933
Railways	39.1	88
Banks	10.2	14
Commerce	3.6	5.5
Mines	3.0	20
Industry	2.4	24

It would have been surprising if, on the basis of this development and links with foreign capital, no group had come into existence with a leaning towards the most powerful of all post-1914 foreign influences—those of British and French finance capital. Such a group did in fact make its appearance, with varying influences on Turkish foreign policy. At the Montreux Conference on the question of refortifying the Dardenelles (1936), the influence of this group was sufficient to make the Turkish delegation itself wobble over to the side of its British opponents, leaving the burden of the fight for the principle of “the Black Sea for the Black Sea Powers” more than once to the U.S.S.R. The same influence expressed itself for a short time, during the last months of the life of Kemal, the leader of the new Turkey, in the coming to power of a frankly pro-British nominee of powerful commercial and financial groups, Djelal Bayar. When Kemal died and was succeeded as President by his old colleague in the War of Independence, Ismet Inenü, there was a temporary reversal of policy, back to the old line of independence and friendship with the Soviet Union. But when Europe began to smell of powder, in the summer of 1938, the internal struggle again brought the pro-British group uppermost.

Moreover, the Allies had a powerful support for their blandishments to the Turkish leaders in the growing appetites and widening aggression of Italian imperialism, constructing submarine and air bases close to the Turkish coasts and casting a greedy eye on Asia Minor. It was, indeed, the activities of the Italians which precipitated events, and led that section of the Turkish national bourgeoisie which for the time being was uppermost to forget the great lesson of the War of Independence—that the Turkish Republic had come into existence in spite of the Bank of England and the Banque de France—and to conclude an alliance with British and French imperialism, enemies of Turkey’s only reliable friend—the U.S.S.R.

Not content with securing Turkey as an ally and potential “opener” of a Near Eastern front, Allied imperialism has done its utmost to send Turkey as its vanguard into the Balkans. For there is a bone to pick with German imperialism there, not only on military grounds. Thanks to the peculiar methods of Nazi financial expansion—which differ from those of the City of London approximately in the same way as the methods of Dick Turpin differed from those of Horatio

Bottomley—the Balkans in recent years have been falling more and more under German economic domination. Apart from certain mineral production—Rumanian oil, Yugoslav lead and copper—they are agrarian countries ; the peasantry constitute 67 per cent. of the population in Greece, 76 per cent. in Yugoslavia, 81 per cent. in Rumania, 82 per cent. in Bulgaria. These States can only exist by exporting their produce, and are almost entirely dependent upon imports for manufactured goods, including the very implements of their agricultural production. During the great years when Mr. Chamberlain was encouraging Nazi expansion by every conceivable means, energetically supported by the Bank of England, the German Government was able to establish almost a stranglehold upon the Balkan States. Here are the figures, published by the League of Nations in 1938, showing what percentage of their exports went to Germany :

	1929	1934	1937
Bulgaria	29.9	42.8	43.1
Greece	23.2	22.5	31.0
Rumania	27.6	16.6	17.8
Yugoslavia	8.5	15.4	21.7
Turkey	13.3	37.4	51.0

The percentage of German imports coming from these five countries and Hungary rose from 7.1 in 1934 to 12.3 in 1937 ; and in exchange Germany, which could only send them 5.3 per cent. of her exports in 1934, was sending them more than twice as much—11.3 per cent.—by 1937.

Thus the possibility of a new front in the Near East promises, not only to provide a means of striking either at the U.S.S.R. or at Germany, but of eliminating a powerful competitor (albeit fostered and nurtured by the National Government itself).

Skilfully playing on the desperate efforts the Balkan States have made in recent years to shake off the German stranglehold, and on national problems which most of them have to face in their own countries, the Allies sent Turkey into the Balkan Entente meeting on February 2 at Belgrade with the very obvious purpose of pulling the Entente into the anti-German combination, under the banner of combating alleged "Soviet aggression." M. Sarajoglu left for the meeting on January 31 with the statement to the Turkish press that "our country is not neutral, but is outside the war."

With this slogan in mind, he was proposing the modification of the original basis of the Balkan Entente by taking in Bulgaria. "If the original aim of the pact is now out of date, would it not be better, so runs the general Turkish attitude, to turn it outward, that is to say towards solidarity in the face of any threats of aggression from abroad ?" (the *Times* Belgrade correspondent, February 2). Turkey was prepared, by its treaty with Britain and France, to facilitate the execution of Allied guarantees to Rumania, said the correspondent ; and M. Sarajoglu might well turn to Rumania with the suggestion

that she should "take into account the interests of Hungary in Transylvania and of Bulgaria in the Dobrudja." The very fact of the omission of the Soviet claim to Bessarabia, seized forcibly from Soviet Russia in 1918, indicates the true measure of altruism of the Turkish proposals. Simultaneously the National Government brought pressure to bear on Rumania to be "reasonable" by stopping exports to that country, with certain exceptions, pending a more satisfactory arrangement with regard to deliveries of Rumanian oil to Germany and Great Britain respectively (*Yorkshire Post* political correspondent, February 2).

As a result of these efforts, the Balkan Entente, it is true, was not swung into action, or even into a *bloc* in favour of the Allies against Germany; but the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* was able to report on February 12 that Turkey had persuaded Greece and Yugoslavia to join with her in giving harbour facilities to Bulgaria, and that Rumania had undertaken to grant credits—privileges which would not have been granted unless Bulgaria had agreed to drop her territorial demands for the time being. What all these measures were intended for was shown by the correspondent's revealing comment: "The hardening of opinion in Britain, on the line that Russia and Germany must be regarded as full partners in schemes for carving up and dominating Europe, has had its effect in the Balkans."

With these achievements in hand, the warmongers began to come out into the open—and it is no mere coincidence of dates that February 11 saw the opening of that tremendous and decisive offensive of the Red Army against the Mannerheim Line. The whole of the interest in the Balkans was revealed as merely one avenue for potential attack on the U.S.S.R. "Scrutator" in the *Sunday Times*—faithful mouth-piece (at second hand) of what Mr. Chamberlain is thinking—announced on February 18 that "many things are more unlikely than a Russian attack from the Caucasus in the direction of Mosul or Persia." Naturally, the Australian troops in Palestine, in combination with the French Army in Syria, would go to the help of Irak. "Air raids on Baku from some advanced point in Mosul would, if successful, go near to ending the war, and certainly would be a far less risky operation than an attack on the Siegfried Line." A special article in the *Times* enlarged on this courageous argument, two days later, by asserting that it was difficult to see the U.S.S.R. inflicting serious harm on England and France, even if it became a belligerent as the result of an Allied attack on "this unwieldy German supply ship operating under a neutral flag." The Far Eastern Soviet Army and Air Force get their oil from Baku, the sapient writer informed the readers of the *Times*. "The main Baku oilfield is within the range of bombers operating from Turkey and Irak, and Soviet agriculture has scrapped horses in favour of tractors."

On February 25, the *Temps*—voice of the French Foreign Office—joined in. Finland was already a thorn buried in the flesh of the U.S.S.R.

and the Allies have to see to it that the "prodigious efforts" of Moscow to get rid of this abscess were not successful. But there was a second means, just as easy (if this sounds humorous, let the reader remember it was written before the Moscow Treaty of March 12):

To prevent Germany exploiting the oil of the Caucasus and the grain of the Ukraine, by freely effecting intensive transport of supplies all along the northern shores of the Black Sea, advantage should be taken of the weakness of this zone of the Soviet complex, by seeking to break open the badly-healed fractures which formerly separated States who impatiently suffer the Soviet yoke.

For those unaccustomed to diplomatic tongue-twisting, this merely means that the Allies should attack the U.S.S.R. in the Black Sea and endeavour to divide it up into separate bourgeois States, bearing the label of "Ukraine," "Georgia," etc., and ruled by loyal governments, candidates for which can be found in all White emigrant cafés of Paris.

But events did not wait. The Red Army was advancing towards Viborg. As we now know, a group in the Finnish Government had already begun to think of abandoning the anti-Soviet adventure, unwisely begun under the influence of friendly advice from outside. It was necessary to push ahead. So there began, parallel with this propaganda of war—and aggressive war—against the U.S.S.R., a unique campaign of lying provocations about alleged conflicts between Turkey and the U.S.S.R., calculated to incite either one or the other to some hasty measure of self-protection which would precipitate a conflict. After the exercises in imagination of the British and French capitalist Press in connection with the Finnish war, the job was not too difficult. The following are some of the most notorious examples, over the space of one month:

- Feb. 13. The Germans are sending 500,000 men to defend the Soviet oilfields. (Denied by *Reuter* next day).
- Feb. 18. Big Soviet concentrations on the Turkish frontier, and Turkish counter-measures. (Denied in Ankara and Moscow).
- Feb. 19. Soviet battalion crossed the Turkish frontier, conflict with Turkish troops. (Denied February 20).
- Feb. 24. State of emergency proclaimed in Turkey. (Denied in Ankara, February 25).
- Feb. 27. All Turkish ships recalled to port. (Denied same day).
- Feb. 29. Italy asks permission to send warships into the Black Sea to defend interests, as Great Britain was doing the same. (Denied in Rome and London).
- Mar. 4. "The Turkish outlook regarding Russia has recently undergone a striking development. The slow progress of the Soviet war against Finland has encouraged the belief that Russia presented no real menace to Turkey. Among the younger generation the tendency has gone further, and the conviction is growing that the time has come to tackle this traditional enemy while he is still occupied in the north, and not to wait until he makes an attack. Information reaches me from reliable sources that the defences which the Russians are feverishly erecting on the north shores of the Black Sea, notably at Batum and Odessa, are . . . measures against a possible Turkish offensive." (*Daily*

Telegraph Ankara correspondent).

Mar. 14. Turkish ambassador in Rome has taken to Ankara an Italian proposal for collaboration with Turkey against the U.S.S.R. (Denied in Rome and Ankara next day).

While there were doubtless elements of fact in the report of Allied plans for an attack on the U.S.S.R., given by the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Ankara on March 4, in the long extract quoted above, its most characteristic feature was that which it shared with the other reports, namely, its obvious striving at all costs to drive Turkey and the U.S.S.R. into a head-on collision. The reason for this extraordinary flood is not far to seek. Under the influence of events in Finland, not only were the Balkan States drawing back in alarm from the rôle so thoughtfully provided for them, but the Turkish Government was beginning to wobble once again. On March 1 the Turkish Prime Minister, in a speech on the radio, had flatly declared that Turkey was not disposed to undertake any action whatsoever against the U.S.S.R., and there was no proof whatsoever "at present" which would justify the supposition that the U.S.S.R. would undertake direct action against Turkey. Obviously, strong medicine was necessary for such a fit of vacillation. The same medicine was used as in the case of Finland. The results may be equally lamentable, if the Turks allow the doses to continue and grow.

Here is the picture drawn by Kemal Atatürk, in his history of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, of the situation when the present "friends" of Turkey had the country almost at their mercy, and did not need the services of the Turkish soldier for the moment :

The army was disarmed and armaments and shells continued to be taken away. The Entente Powers did not respect the armistice conditions. Their army and fleet, on various pretexts, were at Constantinople. The vilayet of Adana was occupied by the French; Urfa, Marash and Anntab by the British. Italian troops were concentrated at Adalia and Konia. British forces proceeded to occupy Merzifun and Constantinople . . . Finally, on May 15, 1919, the Greek army landed at Smyrna, with the consent of the Entente Powers.

There is no particular reason for thinking that the Turks would meet with any different treatment, if they turned against the one Power whose aid helped to pull them out of this situation, during the War of Independence. One thing is certain—that the U.S.S.R., here as everywhere, would conduct its war of self-defence, if forced to it, not on its own territory but on that of the aggressor, wherever it could reach him—or them. The experience of the Finnish war, combined with those of the Japanese in recent years, should prove that the U.S.S.R. has considerable means for doing so.

The British working class has the means, for its part, to prevent the monstrous plans of the warmongers coming to fruition—or, if the warmongers make the venture, of bringing those plans to disaster for imperialism, and to victory for the cause of the international working class.

Before the Labour Party Conference

BY ALLEN HUTT

THE LABOUR PARTY conference meets at Bournemouth this Whitsun to face by far the gravest situation that the Party has known in its forty years of life. For the war of 1939 has provided an even keener test than the war of 1914, as must indeed be obvious. And it is a strange irony that those in the dominant leadership who, at the Southport conference last year, defeated the policy of a People's Front on the ground that they could not sully the purity of their Socialism by association with non-Socialist democrats, have united fully with non-Socialist reactionaries in the prosecution of the present war. This re-emphasises the truth of the argument constantly advanced in these pages that the "Socialist" cry of a year ago was a hypocritical pretext and nothing more.

It is now evident that the alliance between the Labour Party leaders and the Chamberlain Government is the key question for every member of the Party. It is true that the leaders themselves qualify that alliance with many words. Mr. Attlee, for example, has been known to say that he "distrusts" the Government. It is claimed that the Labour Party conscientiously fulfils the rôle of Parliamentary opposition. But the kernel of the whole matter lies in the reality of the alliance, or accommodation, or collaboration, or whatever you like to call it; and this has, of course, been formally and outwardly expressed in the political truce.

There can be no doubt that it is because the political truce sums up the whole capitulation of the Party leadership that feeling against it has hardened most strongly amongst the rank and file. The Bournemouth conference agenda itself provides the clearest evidence of this; for out of a grand total of 200 resolutions there are 50 on the truce, almost all demanding in varying terms that an end be put to it. Opinion throughout the Party, that is to say, has not been deceived by the singular arguments advanced officially in attempted justification of the truce. These arguments have come from the mouth of Mr. Attlee and in a headquarters circular. They will not be unfamiliar to readers of this article. Briefly, the claim is that there is no truce. The Labour Party, to quote Mr. Attlee, does all it can to support the nation's war effort (that is, support the Government that is conducting the war) "without in the least relinquishing our Socialist objective." The truce merely amounts to a "standstill arrangement" with regard

to bye-elections. The reason for this arrangement is put no higher than that the black-out, evacuation, mobilisation and changes of residence have made "effective elections a practical impossibility," involving the disfranchisement of a large number of workers (which, it will be observed, the official policy proposes to overcome by disfranchising everybody !). But surely there is no need to refute so specious an argument—a halting pretext if ever there was one. Bye-elections that have been forced by the intervention of Communist or Independent Labour anti-war candidates have entirely disposed of any claim that electioneering is impossible under war conditions. And the point that the Labour leaders have to answer has been put by a Conservative political commentator—"the whole weight of the Socialist party machine at Transport House is at present thrown into the scale against opposing or embarrassing the Government in any way at all In this war to defend democracy, our system of election to Chamberlain's House of Commons has become similar to the methods of election to Hitler's Reichstag" (*Sunday Express*, February 11, 1940).

It is plain that all the verbal claims of "opposition" to the government, of continued "independence," do not hold water when set against the facts of the first half-year of war ; and that is the reason for the wide hostility that has developed throughout the Labour Party and the working class in general to the political truce. In facing up to this the Bournemouth conference will be dealing with a central issue—the whole significance and purpose of the Labour Party. That, and nothing less, is involved. The initial test of war has already produced its results for all sections of the working-class movement : and it is no idle phrase to say that this Whitsun the eyes of the world will be on Bournemouth.

Is the Labour movement an independent movement of the working class or is it not ? Is it opposed to capitalism and the political parties of capitalism or not ? Is it opposed to a régime of Big Business that is bringing the mass of the people to ruin and threatens their young men with decimation or is it not ? What is the aim of the mass of sincere Socialists in the Labour Party—to fight for Socialism and peace or for capitalism and war ? Clearly I speak here of a fight in deeds, not in words ; for the Party leadership is prodigal of words enough about Socialism, Democracy, Peace, the Rights of Man and so on. Let us just consider the results of six months of the Labour Party leaders' truce with Chamberlainism. It is an instructive and alarming picture.

Take the home front for a start. Here the grimly familiar situation of heavily slashed standards (with worse to come) reveals that there has been an effective abdication of leadership of working-class and popular resistance to the government assault—so say nothing of the conciliatory reception of wage-taxing plans. Real wages are down,

unemployment continues to rise, taxation is crushing, pensions and allowances are beggarly, holidays are threatened, the food chaos and rationing hit the poorest hardest, education has become a farce ; while on the other hand the big monopolists control the whole of the country's economy as never before, the railway stock-holders get the most impudent government hand-out in history, and in general the usual hard-faced men are doing more than usually well out of the war—not least in ways upon which the Ministry of Supply scandals are throwing a suggestive light. To which one may add a reminder of the equally familiar abrogation of the traditional democratic rights, the institution of censorship as rigid as it is fantastic, the whole placing of dictatorial powers in the hands of the Government.

Take next the Empire. India is the heart of the matter. What has been the Labour Party reply to the Indian people's demand for democracy and freedom—a demand which has been met by a wave of relentless repression, arrests of leaders, suppression of newspapers ? Have they stood foursquare with this demand as a demand made of right ? The answer was given in the India debate in the House of Commons on October 26, when Mr. Wedgwood Benn said for the Labour Party : “ If we criticise the Government's policy, the over-riding consideration in the mind of every honourable member is how they can contribute to the successful issue of the war.” The Government's full appreciation of this attitude was thereupon expressed by Sir Samuel Hoare, who praised the Labour spokesman's “ eloquent, sympathetic and helpful speech.”

Consider now the case of France. There is no need to labour here the significance of the suppression of democracy and the breaking-up of the working-class movement to the greater glory of the Men of Munich and the Two Hundred Families. The point is that every effort has been made by the leaders here, both in public and in private, to justify the infamous proceedings of the Daladier-Blum clique. The suppression and violent persecution of the Communist Party has been described approvingly as “ perfectly logical ” (Citrine). Close association has been maintained with the Blum leadership and an official Anglo-French Socialist conference on February 22 declared that both parties must work for closer Anglo-French union as “ the necessary basis for a new order ” ; this conception of “ peace ” coming as a kind of super-Versailles, based on a complete interlock of the imperialisms of Britain and France is, of course, now a commonplace of government war propaganda. It will be noticed what a gulf there lies here between the view of the leadership and the opinion of the movement as a whole, well exemplified by the unanimous protest of the London Trades Council against the persecution of its opposite number in Paris. But that shows how far they have to travel who, through their association with Chamberlain have to defend his junior partner, Daladier.

This French business is a useful point at which to inject one or two considerations about the Labour Party's devotion to democracy and Socialism. It has recently become the official line to insist that the Labour Party stands for Democratic Socialism (the term Social Democracy has even been revived by some personages), apparently in order to make it quite clear that their Socialism shall under no circumstances be construed as revolutionary—that is to say as just plain socialism. The first choice of the newly reorganised Labour Book Service, an officially sponsored body, is a work dealing with this theme ; and from this it transpires, among many other remarkable things, that “Democratic Socialism” has nothing whatever to do with either democracy or Socialism. This is made plain in a detailed review elsewhere in this issue. At the same time it is significant that a far-reaching change has been effected in the principal Labour organ, the *Daily Herald*, whose editor has been forced into resignation and an editor not even nominally a Socialist set to reign in his stead, for the first time in that newspaper's history. This may have little enough meaning so far as the actual editorial conduct of the *Herald* is concerned ; but this cool removal of the mask, with no sign from Transport House of any repudiation of its ownership agreement with Odhams, is not a little revealing.

Let us conclude this part of the argument by turning to what is after all the most important instance, fundamentally, of how the abandonment of the movement's independence works out in practice. I refer to the policy of the Labour leaders towards the Soviet Union and the line of “spreading the war.” It was Finland that brought matters to a head ; and the blast of raging anti-Soviet spleen was certainly without parallel ; it far exceeded the twenty-year-old wailing and gnashing of teeth of the late Ramsay MacDonald over Georgia. I do not propose here to present a detailed documentary exposure of a campaign that can only be described as an outrage. Our interest must lie in its political meaning. That, I suggest, can only be interpreted in one way. The British ruling class has always been the most unrelenting in its enmity to the land where the working class is in power and where Socialism is being built. The Chamberlain Government, in particular, pursued a policy of appeasement of Fascism, betrayal of collective security and cold shouldering of the Soviet Union which had no meaning except as part of a general strategy for a final desperate trial of strength with the Socialist sixth of the world. The working out of this strategy, through all its twists and turns, including the present war “against Hitlerism,” has been plotted with unfailing accuracy month by month in the editorial pages of this journal. And when the Soviet Union, compelled to resort to arms to end the menace of Mannerheim-Hambro-British-General-Staff Finland, finds itself faced with the threat of an allied war of intervention, it is the Labour Party leaders who go even farther than their capitalist patrons in

shouting for this spread of the war.

Now that the Finnish adventure has ended with the complete triumph of the Soviet Union and the utter discomfiture of Chamberlain and Daladier it is possible to see still more clearly just where the Labour leaders' policy had led them. For it was they who equally with the interventionists of London and Paris wished to see peaceful Scandinavia go up in flames. Mr. James Walker, M.P. (the not inconsiderable member of the Party Executive who at the Bournemouth conference in 1937 introduced the final official acceptance of unconditional rearmament), said in January: "If the other Scandinavian countries will throw in their lot with Finland we feel quite sure that Russia would be decisively defeated." In speech and writing the fantasy of a "free Finnish democracy" was duly applied to the most notoriously reactionary country in Northern Europe by the very persons and papers which up to very recent years had not been slow in their emphasis on that latter fact. The *Daily Herald* hired a feature writer to portray Butcher Mannerheim as the "saviour" and "Grand Old Man" of Finland (rather the same effect as if Jaurès, when he founded *l'Humanité* in 1904, had marked the occasion with a ceremonious eulogy of Gallifet, the butcher of the Commune). The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were bracketed as "the two aggressor states" and references were made to "Hitler and his accomplice, Stalin." The lowest depths were plumbed by a Labour Party pamphlet entitled *Finland: the Criminal Conspiracy of Stalin and Hitler*. This astonishing piece of literary and political degeneracy, full of omissions and distortions and flat faking of quotations (a statement which *Pravda* branded as a lie was lifted out of its context and ascribed to *Pravda* itself!) was an open incitement of war against the Soviet Union—marked by such pieces of abuse as "the two gangsters," "bargain in a thieves' kitchen," "the Red Tsar," "executor of the traditional imperialism of Tsarist Russia," "blood guilt and complicity with Nazi Germany." Even the friendly *New Statesman* (March 16, 1940) writes that this pamphlet is "beneath the notice of adults."

This was the language used by those who rushed an official delegation to Finland when they never sent one to Spain; and who, having fatally supported the criminal policy of "non-intervention" during the first critical year of the Spanish War, now sent their representatives, Mrs. Ayrton Gould and Mr. Holmes, into the Executive Committee of the Finland Fund—to sit under the presidency of Lord Plymouth, chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee, and cheek by jowl with Lord Phillimore, chairman of the pro-Franco "Friends of National Spain." A truce with the Caudillo as well as a truce with Chamberlain!

So far had our leadership gone in its blind anti-Soviet passion that no Finnish fairy tale, no transparently stupid lie about the Red

Army was too tall to be swallowed. The celebrated Citrine-Downie-Noel Baker delegation returned in February to repeat nonsense that even the capitalist press had long since abandoned. Telling us, for instance, that old one about the "poor specimens" who "go to the attack with their own machine-guns threatening them from behind" (Mr. Downie in *Reynolds News*, February 18). This when the military correspondent of *The Times* was already speaking of the "great courage" of the Red Army men who show "great resolution both in attack and defence." But then the military quality of the delegation's comments may be deduced from contrasting Sir Walter Citrine's statement: "We saw what a wonderful defensive system the Mannerheim line is" with his later statement to a conference of London trade union officials—after the Red Army assault had breached the line—that there was no such thing as the Mannerheim Line at all and it was purely a Soviet propaganda invention to cover up their own military bungling on the Karelian Isthmus! Contrast the detailed explanation of the great strength of the Mannerheim Line and its forts by the Stockholm correspondent of *The Times* (March 14, 1940) who noted how "the break through at Summa was well timed and well placed . . . the men had been carefully trained in guerilla fighting and had the advantage of good patrols and tanks. In the later stages of the offensive their cunning matched that of the Finns." Or take the survey from the same commentator that the Red Army "had as its first real testing ground the hardest it could have chosen in Europe and for its first serious opponent the best individual fighters in the world," that "most of the armament was first-class stuff . . . the Russians, indeed, must have a remarkable inventiveness," that "by the time the war had ended the Russians had achieved a remarkable fighting form" (*The Times*, March 18, 1940).

So far I have not dwelt on what might appear the most obvious thing, the growing opposition to the war among the Labour Party rank and file. There are 18 resolutions on the Bournemouth agenda calling for withdrawal of Labour support for the war and advocating negotiations for an early peace. These follow naturally the mounting opposition to the war that has found expression in so many local organisations, in Trades Councils, at official Labour regional conferences, and has been met locally by sharp official repression.

While the expulsion of D. N. Pritt has shown that the Labour Party Executive will not hesitate to use the most drastic measures to enforce subservience to its policy, even though the Party Constitution is not involved, the Easter conferences have given new testimony to the spread of sentiment against the war and the political truce. The Co-operative Party's gathering in London recorded the largest vote yet against the war. An amendment to the official resolution characterised the war as a clash of rival imperialisms registering unconditional opposition to it, and urging all sections of the movement

to demand an armistice and the calling of an international workers' conference ; this received 1,323,000 votes as against 3,235,000, and there were some 500,000 abstentions as compared with the subsequent voting on the official policy resolution as a substantive motion. The two union conferences, those of the Shop Assistants and the National Union of Clerks, both opposed the war. The Shop Assistants, representing a 78,000 membership, condemned the war as imperialist by 86 votes to 57, while the Clerks, representing a 14,000 membership, by 58 votes to 26 urged the Trades Union Congress General Council to campaign for an immediate armistice, on the grounds that the working class could only suffer by a continuance of the war. The Shop Assistants further condemned the political truce, urging the Labour Party to withdraw its support of the Government, by 90 votes to 47—a still larger majority, it will be noted, than in their opposition to the war itself.

Let the delegates to Bournemouth think over these things, and over the straightforward appeal of the Cardiff Trades and Labour Council—that the Labour Party should end the political truce and initiate a vigorous campaign to overthrow the National Government, which has clearly revealed itself as a “Government of the ruling class of bankers and capitalists opposed to the interests of the workers.” What has now to be faced is that that implies the immediate reforging of the independence and fighting unity of the movement, a process to be tackled from the bottom up, in the local organisations.

What is Happening Abroad?

WORLD NEWS AND VIEWS

gives you the information you **must** have and **can't** get in any other paper

Published Weekly

Price Threepence

● Obtainable at all progressive Bookshops and from ●

CENTRAL BOOKS LIMITED, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2

who will forward FREE SPECIMEN COPY on application

Engineers Move into Action

BY ARTHUR EDGAR UPTON

THE AIRCRAFT AND engineering workers, the key section of war industry, are on the move. From the Midlands, Glasgow, London, from the great engineering centres of this country, come reports of an increasing number of strike actions on a variety of issues. These strikes, uncoordinated and in some cases isolated, show that the workers in the mass production arms factories are beginning to rebel against the employers' attack. These actions are the first expressions of determination to resist the Government plans for making the workers pay for this war ; they are evidence that the workers are moving into an offensive fight on wages and all other issues raised by the war.

The attack upon the workers is being led by the Government whose propaganda for sacrifice has been eagerly seized by the engineering employers. During the recent wage negotiations, the employers did not hesitate to quote the statements of Cabinet Ministers in support of their refusal to concede the full demands of the workers. It is the National Government which is to-day the key employer of the millions of workers engaged in the arms industry and which is leading this attack upon the wage rates and conditions of the workers. The National Government's arms contracts have already raised some speedily hushed-up scandals, for the rich profitable harvest to be reaped from the manufacture of arms is a tempting bait for the would-be war profiteer. It is to guarantee the profits of their class that they plan the largest scale attack ever known on workshop customs and practices which have been established only as a result of long years of sacrificing struggle of active Trade Unionists in the factories.

These plans affect every section of this great industry, both those engaged in the manufacture of arms and those engaged in commercial work. Widespread dilution and the employment of millions of women at greatly lower rates of pay than at present received by the engineer may hit the headlines ; but in the factories, already the process to displace the skilled worker by the lesser skilled at lesser rates of pay, despite dilution agreements, gives rise to constant conflict.

The Keynes Plan particularly, presents the greatest threat to the arms workers. Not only will they be called upon to submit to wage cuts disguised as deferred payments or savings, but the accompanying proposal to put wages on the "Needs Test" by the introduction of family allowances, introduces a factor into the payment of wages which

will widen the gap between the various rates of pay now prevailing, differences which have been the cause of more disputes than any other cause in the engineering industry.

The wages question particularly assumes more importance as the cost of living rises. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction at the manner of the acceptance of the recent agreement for five shillings per week increase in bonus, instead of the ten shillings increase that was demanded. As has become the practice of the negotiators, they accepted these proposals without any consultation with the members.

At mass meetings organised by the Shop Stewards in the factories, at aggregate meetings convened by trade union organisations, the demand has gone for the immediate granting of the other five shillings of the claim for ten shillings, first put forward in peace time. The rising cost of living has made the wages issue the burning issue of the day. Furthermore, in the factories which are becoming organised, wages assume an even greater importance in most cases, for here we have found that government sub-contracts are being worked on at much worse conditions than in the parent factories, raising the dangers of one factory being used to depress standards enjoyed by another on similar work. However, it is pleasing to note that there is no feeling of resentment against the workers in these factories; the understanding is there and not only understanding, that this is a common fight against the common enemy, the employers. They know that the need is not for worker to be against worker, but to give help through building the trade union and workshop organisation to get wage rates lifted.

Not that wages is the only issue. There are such matters as the onerous conditions created through the "black-out" with attendant poor ventilation. The recent freeze-up caused many protest strikes in the workshops against inadequate heating. Canteen tea has been the subject of boycotts of these profitable private concerns in the works and in one case of a strike. Transport facilities are a constant bone of contention, especially to those who have been called upon to work long and excessive hours.

The control of overtime has become an important issue. Until recently, there was a marked tendency to accept these conditions as they presented an opportunity to underpaid workers to get a little more money. The oft-heard statement was made that this will not last long and so we must make hay while the sun shines. Now, this is changed. Even the overtime hog is kicking, "fed up to the teeth" of a life of all work and sleep. Attempts are being made in a growing number of factories to get some agreement to ensure that at least on one or two days a month there shall be no work, and in the more advanced factories agreements are being secured to stop overtime on certain nights in the week.

In most cases the fight against these conditions, the efforts to secure an easement of the overtime issue, is conducted by the men and women

in the shops. There is no doubting of their desire and ability to fight. This stands in marked contrast to the policy of the trade union leaders, who, far from assisting the efforts of the workers, because of their support for the war have long since abandoned the defence of their members' interests. While the rank and file see that there is to-day an even greater need for unity in the fight against the employers and the government, the leadership of the engineering trade unions find it necessary to do all in their power to sabotage this unity.

In the largest engineering trade union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the top leadership are showing signs of again embarking upon a campaign of disruption with an attack on the Communists in the January issue of their monthly journal. The Executive Committee are putting proposals before this year's Rules Revision Committee that Communists and those connected with them (a very wide term) shall be excluded from office. At the same time, showing yet more clearly their whole undemocratic practice, they are proposing that their term of office shall be extended from three years to five years, and that their salaries shall be raised from £420 on which they pay tax, to £500 upon which the *trade union* shall pay the tax.

Such a policy can only be combated as the fight against the employers is strengthened in the factories, and this fight also carried into the trade union branch. Only by the development of a policy of active struggle can the position be safeguarded.

The engineer remembers what took place in the last war, and those too young to remember are finding plenty of trade unionists who have been stirred into action by this war, to tell them. For instance, on the question of the women workers, there is to-day a better appreciation of this position than ever before. There is a really good attitude to the question, expressed in the growing activity to organise the women workers into the respective trade unions at present catering for women engineers. But the key to the question of the organisation of women is to force open the doors of the powerful Amalgamated Engineering Union, so that the woman worker may become a member of that same trade union which to-day organises the majority of engineering workers. This year's Rules Revision meeting presents a golden opportunity to secure the necessary alterations of rule to permit of this. Already on most Shop Stewards Committees it is now no uncommon sight to see women shop stewards participating in the discussions alongside of the men. That is why there is a strong movement to get the A.E.U. to open its ranks, but if the key is to be turned, more power needs to be developed in order to strengthen the movement for this advance.

The most important need at present, in order to develop the movement on all the numerous issues which war has raised for the arms worker, is leadership and co-ordination. Such co-ordination of the efforts of the active trade unionists to preserve the trade unions for

the purpose for which they have been built, that is the defence of the worker, can only come through the building of an Engineering Shop Stewards' movement which will embrace every section of this great industry, which will link factory to factory, cement the solidarity between the worker, whether employed in aircraft or motors, shipbuilding or ship repair, munitions or lawn mowers, radio or electrical equipment.

A basis for such a movement exists. This basis is the fight in the workshops. There is in existence already a strong shop stewards' movement linking the aircraft workers, as a result of which this section of industry has become organised whereby conditions and earnings have been improved. The inclusion of this movement in a national shop stewards' movement covering every section of the engineering and allied trades will provide a most powerful weapon in the fight against the employers.

This is the burning need of the day. The war has brought the engineering worker face to face with many problems. Any idea that war would bring prosperity to the arms workers is rapidly fading. There is grave danger that many arms workers will be mobilised into the army to work as in France at army rates of pay, in the shops or in the armed forces ; this means that through the use of industrial conscription, or through mass dilution, the whole scheme of reserved occupations may fall to the ground.

As the workshop struggle develops, so the worker is brought face to face with the whole political implications of the present struggle of the working class ; he sees that the fight for decent conditions of existence is inevitably bound up with the whole problem of fighting against the Government and the war now. In the fight of the working-class movement to end the war after the workers' own fashion, aircraft and engineering workers have a most important part to play ; the development of their movement on sound political lines, will be the guarantee that they will fulfil their part in this historical task.

An Outline of the Second Imperialist War*

BY MAO TSE-TUNG

1. *The New Stage of the War*

THE SECOND IMPERIALIST war started long ago and has been going on for a good many years. The Japanese imperialist invasion began in 1931 with the occupation of the three North-eastern Provinces. In 1937 the aggressors launched their large-scale invasion of China. Italian imperialism invaded Abyssinia in 1935; and in 1936 Germany and Italy jointly intervened in Spain. Austria and Czechoslovakia fell to Germany in 1938. By that time more than 500,000,000 people had become involved in the second imperialist war in both the West and the East, while such imperialist states as Britain, France and the United States still did not participate. Consequently, we may well call this period the first stage of the second imperialist war. The present period, when such imperialist states as France and England have begun to participate, may be designated the second stage, for the conditions are entirely changed.

2. *Causes of the War*

The facts of history and Leninist theory show us that the development of capitalism in the imperialist stage is uneven. Thus wars between the imperialist states are inevitable. Now, less than twenty years since the first world war for the redivision of the world, the second imperialist war has broken out. Again the rival imperialisms are fighting for a redivision of the colonies of the world. The first stage of the present war developed from the last world-wide economic crisis. Instead of prosperity, slumps and depressions followed the crisis of 1929-33. Such imperialist states as Germany, who had received little or no spoils in the first world war, have again armed themselves for war in the hope of overcoming their economic crises and of staving off the collapse of capitalism. Thus the second imperialist war has begun and the first stage has already been completed.

The new world economic crisis since 1937 has affected the so-called democracies: England, France and the United States, as well as Ger-

*An Address to the Staff Conference at Yen-an, September 14, 1939. This analysis of the war, made within twelve days of its outbreak, is still worthy of study for the freshness, clearness and simplicity with which this leader of Marxist theory and practice presents the issues.

many, Japan and Italy. Serious political crises spring from economic crises. And from this new economic crisis has come the large-scale war involving Germany, France, England and Poland. To-day the peoples of the world are dissatisfied with capitalism, whether they be the citizens of states long since turned fascist or of those who practise fascism during the war. Political crises and the discontent of the people become more acute from day to day. On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. has so grown in strength that to-day she is impregnable. Faced with these facts, the propertied classes of the imperialist states realised that they must turn the "one-sided" war into a general world war and defeat their imperialist rivals, if they were to avert economic and political dangers and their own doom.

Thus reason the capitalists of the imperialist states on the eve of their downfall. But they do not see that their calculations for averting the economic and political crises and their own certain doom by resorting to war for redivision of the world, will most certainly aggravate the crises and hasten the hour of their death. To-day the capitalists are like mad dogs, maddened by their own system. They are forced to fly at the throats of their imperialist rivals throughout the world. This is the imperialist war we are witnessing to-day.

3. *The Aim of the War*

"War is the armed continuation of international politics." The essence of imperialism is plunder; and the policy of imperialist states, even in peace times, is to plunder. When the aggressions of some imperialisms clash with those of their rivals and an agreement cannot be reached by diplomacy, then the rival systems resort to war in order to continue their policies of aggression. Corresponding exactly with the first imperialist war, the second has for its sole aim the redivision of the world. Again they are fighting to divide up colonies, semi-colonies and spheres of influence in order to rob and to maintain their rule over the peoples of the world. In both the first and the second stages of the present war, the aim has remained constant. But are there other aims? Are there any humanitarian aims? No! Not one. Whether it be Germany, Italy, Japan, England, the United States, France or any state either directly or indirectly participating in this war, there is only one counter-revolutionary and imperialist aim:—to plunder the peoples of the world. Japanese imperialism's "Permanent Peace," Hitler's "National Self-Determination," Chamberlain's "Opposition to Hitlerism," and Daladier's "Help to Poland," are all so much camouflage for policies of *plunder*. But in order to make their aim more palatable and in order to deceive their people, these imperialists order their propaganda experts to manufacture strange and fine-sounding words and slogans.

4. *The Essence of the War*

The essence of war is determined by its political aim. According to.

Comrade Stalin, there are two kinds of wars : (1) just, non-aggressive and emancipatory wars; and (2) unjust and aggressive wars. The first and second imperialist wars alike belong to the second category. The aim of these wars was and is to plunder the people; they neither had nor have one single aim which is not detrimental to the people. Both wars are aggressive, unjust and imperialist. And now, in order to deceive their own peoples and to mobilise public opinion, both parties to the present war shamelessly claim that they are working in the cause of justice and that their adversaries are unjust. This is a ridiculous fraud. Only wars of national emancipation and people's wars of liberation are just wars. In the present situation many people have lost their judgment. Many believe that while Germany is decidedly in the wrong, England, France and Poland are more or less progressive, because England and France are democratic states opposed to fascist states, and that Poland is waging a war of national liberation. This bad confusion of thought comes partly from a failure to understand clearly the aim of the war and partly from an inability to comprehend the differences between the first and second stages of the second imperialist war.

5. The Characteristics of the First Stage of the War

The characteristics of the first stage of the second imperialist war are :

(1) The fascist imperialist states, such as Germany, Italy and Japan, frantically waged wars of aggression against weaker countries, encroaching upon the interests of the "democracies," while inciting fascist provocations within the democracies. Against these crimes the peoples throughout the world demanded opposition to aggression and defence of democracy and urged the so-called democracies, England, France and the United States, to take a stand against aggression so that democracy might be preserved. On more than one occasion the Soviet Union has proposed an anti-aggression united front with the so-called democratic nations. If a war had resulted from such a united stand against the aggressors, if England had supported the efforts of the Soviet Union to check Germany, Italy and Japan by helping Spain and China, then such a war would have been just and progressive. But England and France did not intervene—instead, they adopted a policy of "non-intervention." Rather, they preferred to let the aggressors and their victims become exhausted in the conflict so that they might then step in and seize the lion's share of the spoils. As long as the people had insufficient power to compel the capitalists of the so-called democracies to discard their counter-revolutionary policy of "non-intervention," so long could the one-sided war be prolonged. This is the first characteristic of the first stage of the war.

(2) At the same time that imperialist Germany, Italy and Japan were prosecuting their wars of aggression, the so-called democratic states were conniving with them. Meanwhile wars of another kind were being

waged—wars of national emancipation. Such were the anti-Italian war of Abyssinia, the war of the Spanish Republic against Italy and Germany and the great anti-Japanese war of China. The Soviet Union and the peoples of the entire world have supported these victims of aggression in their wars for national liberation. Their wars are just and non-aggressive and their aim is emancipation. This is the second characteristic of the first stage of the war. The limitations of the imperialist war and the existence of the anti-imperialist war are the two characteristics of the first stage of the second imperialist war.

6. *Our Revolutionary Policy in the First Stage of the War*

Based on a clear understanding of the characteristics of the first stage of the war, our revolutionary policy was to organise the anti-aggression united front of the invaded states in order to resist the attacks of the aggressors, and to carry on an ever-increasing anti-fascist struggle in the democracies, the better to defend democracy. Meanwhile it was necessary to continue the struggle for the formation of an anti-aggression united front between the Soviet Union and the democracies to check the further encroachment of fascist aggression. In short, the main task of the revolutionary forces in that period was to weld all the potential forces of the whole world into an anti-fascist and anti-aggression united front in order to resist the frantic invasions of the three fascist states and to defeat the fascist attacks on democracy from within. At that time the united front might have taken the following four possible forms :

(a) In the capitalist states, the people's united front and the united front of the proletariat.

(b) In the colonial and semi-colonial states, the national united front and a united front of the proletariat and the propertied classes.

(c) An anti-aggression united front of the Soviet Union and the democracies.

(d) A fourth type of organisation was possible at that time, because in the face of the frantic invasions of the fascist states and the fascist attacks from within, the capitalists of the democratic countries and their governments had to a certain extent a common interest with their own people, the peoples of their colonies and semi-colonies, and even with the Soviet Union.

In all of these four, the strongest factor was and is the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union could have organised a really effective united front with the governments of the so-called democratic states, co-ordinated with the people's united front of the several countries and the national united fronts of the colonies and semi-colonies, to check further aggression by the fascist nations, and thus delay the outbreak of the second world war (if war had developed in spite of such a united front, the fascist states would have been defeated); then such a united front would have actually benefited the peoples of the entire world, as well

as the peoples of the invaded countries. And such an action would have been supported by the international proletariat. In order to accomplish this policy, the Soviet Union entered the League of Nations, concluded the Franco-Soviet and the Soviet-Czechoslovakian mutual assistance pacts and even carried on the Anglo-French-Russian talks. This revolutionary policy, consonant with the international situation at that time, was necessary and correct.

7. The Breakdown of the Anglo-French-Russian Talks and the Beginning of the Second Stage of the War

The propertied classes of the so-called democracies feared that the fascists would encroach upon their own interests and at the same time they dreaded the growth of the revolutionary forces. They feared the Soviet Union, the democratic movements of their own peoples and the national emancipation movements of the colonies and semi-colonies. Consequently they refused to join the Soviet Union in a real anti-aggression united front and a real anti-aggression war. On the contrary, they formed a counter-revolutionary alliance and proceeded to conduct their own aggressive warfare. For more than four months, from April 15 to August 23, the Anglo-French-Russian negotiations were carried on. The patience of the Soviet Union was tried severely. England and France, from beginning to end, refused to agree to the principle of equality. While they demanded that the Soviet Union guarantee their own safety, yet they refused to guarantee the Soviet Union. They refused to offer assurances to the Baltic States, thus giving Germany an opening for further encroachment. Nor would they permit the Red Army to pass through Polish territory in order to resist the aggressors. The proposals of England and France supported counter-revolutionary, and not revolutionary, aims. Naturally such proposals could not be accepted by the Soviet Union, while her offers, which were based on the principles of equality and reciprocity, and which would have served to check the spread of aggression and really benefited world peace, were turned down by England and France. This was the basic cause of the breakdown in the Anglo-French-Russian talks. It was then that Germany deserted her opposition to the Soviet Union, was willing to throw overboard the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact and recognised the inviolability of the Soviet Union's frontiers. Thus the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was concluded. England and France demonstrated their lack of sincerity in the parleys with the Soviet Union and in their failure to check aggression. Their sabotage of the Moscow talks proves that Chamberlain had made up his mind to war.

Hence, the outbreak of the second imperialist war follows directly from Chamberlain's and not only Hitler's desire to fight, for the effective prevention of war demanded the participation of the Soviet Union. Even such representatives of the propertied classes in England as

Lloyd George realise the truth of this. But until to-day, some fools still fail to understand this obvious conclusion and maintain that Chamberlain went into the war without any preparation. Nor do they understand that Chamberlain only participated in the parleys with the Soviet Union for the sake of deceiving public opinion, that he might say, "We, the British and French Governments, have tried our best. Since the alliance of the three powers has not been possible, we have to declare war on Germany."

It is for these reasons that the war between Germany and England, France and Poland broke out early in September. Thus opened the new stage of the second imperialist war—the second stage.

8. *Characteristics of the Second Stage of the War*

Since the outbreak of the general European war, conditions have radically changed. The differentiation between the democratic and the fascist states has lost meaning. To-day differentiation can only be made between :

- (1) Those states which carry on the unjust, aggressive and imperialist war or those states that actually support it; and
- (2) The countries that carry on and support the just, non-aggressive and people's wars for national emancipation.

To-day we must make new distinctions on the basis of new conditions, discarding the old methods of differentiation. The propertied classes of the democracies have finally refused to collaborate with their people and with the Soviet Union and they are now waging a war of spoliation. Faced with these facts, every Communist realises that the time is now past to try to win over the propertied classes of the so-called democracies and their respective governments, to set up a united front with the Soviet Union, with the peoples of other states and with the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Every Communist realises that the only possibility to-day is for the Soviet Union to mobilise an anti-war and anti-aggression united front of the peoples of all the capitalist states and the oppressed peoples of all the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and excluding the propertied classes of the so-called democracies. These classes must be excluded because they are the ones who waver and then retreat to the camp of the enemy. Hence the possible constituents of the united front have been reduced from four to three. This changed situation, first of all, has turned the one-sided second imperialist war into a general war (turning the one-sided reaction into general reaction); and has simplified the constitution of the new anti-war and anti-aggression united front. These are the two characteristics of the second stage of the second imperialist war.

Many comrades, without understanding the changed conditions and the characteristics of these changes, think the situation is the same as before. They view the new developments from their old standpoint and thus neglect the qualitative changes which have produced the new

incidents. In consequence, they unconsciously make the same mistakes as the social-democrats. I am certain that once these comrades realise the nature of the present situation, they will remedy their errors.

9. *Our Revolutionary Policy in the Second Stage of the War*

Realising the nature of the characteristics of the second stage of the war, what is the revolutionary policy of the proletariat led by the Communist Party?

(A) In all belligerent states, our policy is to call upon the people to oppose this imperialist war and to expose its imperialist nature. In every belligerent state the war must be regarded as robbery and the people warned not to be deceived by imperialist aggression. The people must be won to the struggle for the establishment of the united front against the imperialist war and persuaded to turn the imperialist war into a revolutionary war in their own countries.

In every belligerent state, Communist members of parliament must be prepared to cast their votes against the war, firmly and bravely, just as Comrade Karl Liebknecht, leader of the German proletariat, did in the Reichstag during the first imperialist war. They must not permit themselves to be confused by the Social-Democratic Party's false slogan of "defence of the fatherland" (which means nothing but the fatherland of the propertied classes and their gangs of bandits). By shamelessly advocating support of the second imperialist war they repeat the same old games they played in the first imperialist war.

The Japanese Social-Democratic Party, called the "Social Mass" Party, has long since sold out the proletariat by supporting the Japanese militarists' war of aggression. Giving way to the threats and bribes of Chamberlain and Daladier, the social-democratic parties in England and France are selling out the proletariat and supporting the predatory-imperialist war of England and France. In Poland the Social-Democratic Party supported the reactionary government of the Polish propertied classes, the running dogs of Chamberlain, and sold out the national interests of the country.

Whether they be citizens of Germany, Italy and Japan, or of England, France and Poland, all Communists in the belligerent states must solely work to win over the masses to the revolutionary united front in preparation for turning the counter-revolutionary war into a revolutionary war. To accomplish this aim, it is necessary to expose the treachery of the Social-Democratic Parties.

(B) In all such neutral nations as the United States, Communists should expose to the people the imperialist policy of the government of the propertied classes. Though nominally neutral, the policy of the United States is to support the imperialist war and to reap profit from it. During the past two years, the American imperialists, wearing the false mask of sympathy, have made tremendous fortunes out of the Sino-Japanese War.

(C) In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, as in China, it is the task of the national united fronts to resist the aggressor; or to oppose the aggressor, as in India. The united fronts should strive to win national independence. In order best to develop the united front and defeat the enemy, traitors who betray the interests of the nation must be opposed. In the colonies of the belligerent nations, the people must oppose the national traitors who advocate support of the imperialist war; and they must oppose mobilisation of the people for the war. The colonial peoples must be told of the suffering and destruction in the first imperialist war. The national liberation movements cannot succeed in the colonies and semi-colonies if the national traitors are not opposed.

10. *The Future of the War*

The second imperialist war will not end soon. I am in complete agreement with Comrade Voroshiloff's address to the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He said, "Modern war is war of attrition, prolonged, unending and indecisive." "The inevitable general armed conflict will be a life and death struggle unprecedented in the history of the world." The second imperialist world war is an unparalleled calamity to mankind. The entire world will be swept with death, disease, hunger, unemployment, curtailment of civil rights and destruction of families. Faced with such annihilation, we cannot doubt that the peoples of the imperialist nations will awake and join hands with their oppressed brothers of the colonies and semi-colonies. Together they will oppose the imperialist war and sweep the world with revolutions far greater than those of the first world war.

At the time of the first imperialist world war, with the exception of Russia, there was no Communist Party. To-day, conditions are entirely different. Communist Parties have been established in the nations of the world and their political organisations have been strengthened and tested in the years of conflict. During the first imperialist world war there was no socialist state. To-day the Soviet Union lives—the greatest power in the world! The Soviet Union firmly opposes imperialist war and unflinchingly supports the peoples' wars for national emancipation. To-day, the world is clearly divided into two camps. The propertied classes, whether they participate directly or indirectly in the imperialist war, are the reactionaries. But clashes between these two factions will never prevent them from joining forces against the Soviet Union, the emancipation movement of the peoples, the national liberation movements of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies and the world revolution. It is childish to hope that they will continue to fight until they are easily overthrown by the revolutionary forces. To-day we have the world front of reaction and opposing it, the Soviet Union, the movements for emancipation in the imperialist nations and the national liberation movements in the colonies and semi-colonies. Together they are charged with the responsibility of building the revolutionary front,

of overthrowing the front of reaction, of turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary war, of destroying the basic cause of war—the capitalist class—and of releasing all the oppressed peoples from capitalism and imperialist war. This is a tremendous struggle. It requires of every revolutionary that he hold out staunchly and firmly. It is a process of educating, organising and leading the people in the struggle against the capitalist class. Capitalist economy is dying. Great change and revolution are at hand. We are living in a new period of revolutionary struggle—a time of birth for a new world. To-day we are entering this momentous period.

Having carried on the war of resistance against the Japanese militarist aggressors for two years, the Chinese nation, to-day, is an important and powerful constituent of the revolutionary front of the world. None can doubt that the war for the national liberation of four hundred and fifty millions will have tremendous influence on the struggle for reforming the world. Imperialist war is destructive, whether it be in Europe or in China. But the existence and growth of the Soviet Union, of the people's movements for emancipation in the capitalist nations and of the movements for national liberation in the colonies and semi-colonies—all these are friends of China and her reliable supporters. Together, China, the Soviet Union and all the peoples' movements for freedom and independence must build a strong and unshakeable united front—a revolutionary united front—to oppose the front of counter-revolution. Wars and crises weaken and cripple the imperialists. This is favourable for the people's national liberation and freedom movements, for China's resistance and for the construction of a Communist order by the Soviet Union. Clouds darken the horizon, but breaking through them we see the bright sun of to-morrow. The days of imperialism are numbered—the fighters for freedom are girding for the final conflict. If the National Anti-Japanese United Front of the Chinese people remains firm, if we hold out in the war of resistance, oppose surrender, strengthen unity and progress in democracy, if we struggle on shouting the slogan of progress and freedom—then will our enemy be annihilated and then will the new, free and independent China come into being.

DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

Indian National Congress Resolution

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AT RAMGARH, MARCH 18, 1940.

This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee. The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this War, as an affront to them, which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the War fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the War, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress therefore strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the War. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and dominion status, or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

The Congress is further of opinion

that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognised minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood. The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities for development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order.

The Congress cannot admit the right of the Rulers of Indian States, or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or the Provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the States is of British creation and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected.

The Congress withdrew the Ministries from the Provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the War and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step must naturally be followed by Civil Disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis. The Congress desires to draw the attention of Congressmen to Gandhi's declaration that he can only undertake the responsibility of declaring civil disobedience when he is satisfied that they are strictly observing discipline and are carrying out the constructive programme prescribed in the Independence Pledge.

The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle for Indian independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of Civil Disobedience is to evoke the

spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation.

The Congress hereby authorises the All-India Congress Committee and, in the event of this being necessary, the Working Committee to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution, as the Committee concerned may deem necessary.

READERS' DISCUSSION GROUPS

The following addresses of meetings of Readers' Discussion Groups are published for the information of other readers in those areas who may be interested.

DISCUSSION GROUPS REGULARLY MEETING

London—

- Stepney* Mr. P. Piratin, 18 Lukin Street, E.1.
Stamford Hill .. Mr. T. Gruner, 18 Stamford Hill Mansions, N.16.
Finchley Mrs. Love, 21 Glenhurst Road, N.12.
Hampstead Garden Suburb .. Write c/o "L.M.," 43 Museum Street, W.C.1.
 (Next meeting 8 p.m., April 15.)
Medical Group .. Write c/o University Labour Club, 15 Percy Street, W.1 (Meets 2nd Monday in each month at 8 p.m.)
Whitechapel .. Write c/o Circle House, Alie Street, E.1. (Meets 8 p.m. April 3 and 17, and May 1, 15 and 29.)

Provinces—

- Halifax* Mr. H. Seal, 9 Grove Square, Ovenden, Halifax.
Warrington .. Mr. A. Chambers, 28 Lovely Lane, Warrington.
Blackburn Write c/o 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.
Bradford Mr. C. Marshall, 13 Fairfield Road, Bradford.
Pinner, Middlesex Pinner Progressive Club, 2 Bell Parade, Pinner Green (Bus 183.) 8.15 p.m., Tuesday, April 30.

DISCUSSION GROUPS IN FORMATION

- Hampstead* Write c/o 43 Museum Street, W.C.1.
Islington Mr. P. Burkel, c/o 48 Islington Park Street, Upper Street, N.1.
Edgware and Mill Hill Mr. P. Robertson, 22 Elmgate Gdns., Mill Hill, N.W.7.
Stoke Newington .. Mr. R. Rosenthal, 47 Manor Road, N.16. Inaugural Meeting at this address, Thursday, April 11, 8 p.m.
Dublin Write c/o 43 Museum Street, W.C.1.

BOOK REVIEW

Philistine Gospel

The Politics of Democratic Socialism by E. F. M. Durbin. (Routledge. 7s. 6d.)

OF ITSELF THIS miserably stale piece of Red baiting by an academic Philistine would be beneath notice or refutation as it is in any event beneath contempt. Yet a certain extraneous importance attaches to the work, because of the manner of its publication and reception. It is the first choice of the newly-reorganised Labour Book Service and has been assiduously promoted as a basic statement of policy. Its praises have been sung by Transport House and the Tory Press. Mr. Herbert Morrison is enthusiastic. Mr. J. A. Spender "knows nothing better." Professor Tawney vouchsafes an Olympian nod, accompanied by a reference to the "original" character of the work which I take leave to construe as irony.

It seems, therefore, that we have here a work bearing the stamp of authority as an exposition of the fundamental views of the present Labour leadership, a latter-day Gospel of British Social-Democracy. Let us see what it amounts to.

"Democratic Socialism" is the political commodity now offered to the customers by the Transport House emporium—with special stress on the "Democratic"—and it will be interesting to see how it is put across in Mr. Durbin's officially sponsored sales talk. Interesting indeed; for it is made quite clear that "Democratic Socialism" has nothing whatever to do with either democracy or socialism.

Democracy, you see, is not at all a matter of certain rights and liberties, enjoyable by all within the law. Mr. Durbin sneers at the "obsession" of the "worthy and excitable persons who are always agitating about 'freedom of speech' and 'civil liberties'" (p. 262). The Public Order Act was fine, since it was directed against the Fascists and Communists (no mention of the Harworth miners). And the essence of democracy is just this: that the Conservative and Labour Parties agree to play ball with each other, or in Durbinian phrase there is a "contract" between "the Parties contending for power in the State not to persecute each other" (p. 241). This, of course, was the view of the late unlamented James Ramsay MacDonald ("In Parliament," he said on a famous occasion in 1924, "it will still be a fight of gentlemen"). But then the whole of this passage reeks of stale MacDonaldism (Mr. Durbin's proclamation at p. 278 that "there are men and women of reason and compromise in Labour, Liberal and Conservative Parties" has the good old "Council of State" ring).

Let us not, however, be unfair. Mr. Durbin transcends MacDonald in the main conclusion he draws from his definition of democracy. For he asserts that his two High Contracting Parties must be prepared to combine together to use force "to limit, and even suppress altogether" any revolutionary party which may secure substantial support from the electorate and therefore threaten the continuance of the Parliamentary ball-game (p. 277). The issue is plain. While the Communist Party* is small it is "not *expedient*" (his

*It is unnecessary to waste time on Mr. Durbin's bracketing of the Fascists with the Communists. It is such a stale old Social-Democratic trick; and in any event irrelevant to Mr. Durbin's argument, since Social-Democratic leaders have often enough helped to persecute Communists, but have never yet in like manner seriously attacked the Fascists.

italics) to attack it ; but let the Communists only gain, by legal and constitutional means, a decisive political position, and it will be " necessary to suppress " them by a Holy Alliance of Tory and Labour—" a type of political alignment of the greatest importance " whose suppressive measures involve no " logical inconsistency in a democrat " (pp. 276, 278). A Durbin come to judgment, Daladier might well cry ; and I hope the Two Hundred Families will get up a little subscription for one who has so conveniently remade Democracy in their own image.

Socialism, now, is no matter of working-class power, or expropriating the expropriators, or building a classless society. No indeed. It is a diluted kind of State capitalism—" substantial control " by the State, not necessarily with State ownership (p. 294). " It is unlikely that it will injure private interests so deeply " (p. 309). This is vital, because the main point is at all costs not to provoke the ruling class to armed resistance ;* to appease our Francos in advance no social measures must be envisaged of which they would not essentially approve. And for the sake of this remote and uncertain vista of public corporations slowly broadening down from Transport Board to Transport Board the working class must practise " self-denial," must learn to " care for something less immediate than better housing," must accept the reduction of improvements in the social services " to the necessary minimum," must realise that all this involves " abandoning the hope of rapid social betterment for some considerable time " (pp. 298, 299). So much for Mr. Durbin's " Socialism " ; as he truthfully says, it is an " unpopular gospel."

This bleak prospect is the only positive offering that Transport House's new Prophet can make after he has tackled his main object of demolishing the " Communist Thesis " of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. To that task he devotes the central section of his book, the only one, he affirms, which " is in any important sense my own." It is not really in any important sense his own, since it is nothing more than a regurgitation of all the most ancient and exploded anti-Marxist gags of which countless dim dons have been delivered any time these seventy years past. And Mr. Durbin cheerfully reduces his whole treatment to absurdity by admitting that he has " no technical competence," " can pretend to no scholarship," in Marxism (p. 21). This is profoundly true. It is odd that he does not apply to himself the other true remark in the book—that " the parents of political wisdom are mastery of detail and moderation of statement " (p. 319).

" Mastery of detail ! " Why, if I wished to compile a critical catalogue of the grosser errors and ignorances of this preposterous farrago I should require a whole number of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*. Really someone ought to found a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Aged " Refutations " of Marxism ; such a body would certainly have to prosecute Mr. Durbin, for he relentlessly goads the familiar and hoary wrecks into yet another pitiful totter across the stage. Here are all the most venerable ones : " history is exclusively determined by ' economic ' forces " (p. 157), which every tyro in Marxism knows to be nonsense ; the dictatorship of the proletariat is " the dictatorship of the Communist Party . . . over the proletariat " (p. 206), which to any first-year student of Leninism is a joke ; the Communists are civil war-mongers, " who press upon the working class the necessity for shedding blood " (p. 312) (shades of MacDonald misquoting Lenin on " heavy civil war ! ").

*Note the retreat from the traditional Labour Party view that, once a majority Government was in power, the full force of constitutional authority could and would be exerted against any rebellion from the right. Even MacDonald used to insist on this.

Now since Mr. Durbin himself thinks the questions of dictatorship and civil war are the most important we will take him up on them. It is a ridiculously easy task, since he appears to be unacquainted with the standard Marxist statements. Thus on dictatorship he is sublimely ignorant of the fact that from Marx in 1848 to Lenin in 1920 the position of Marxism has been plain and straightforward. The proposition simply is that the working class cannot conquer and maintain power, making democracy real for the mass of the people, unless it instantly exercises absolute authority (*i.e.*, acts *dictatorially*) to overpower the enemies of the people, the enemies of democracy. The working class, in short, must possess "absolute supremacy," to use the later Chartist phrase. Mr. Durbin is so "original" that all he does is to repeat, almost verbatim, the "arguments" that the Russian Mensheviks flung at Lenin and that Lenin answered at length before Mr. Durbin was born. I have dealt with all this recently in these pages; and the curious are hereby referred to THE LABOUR MONTHLY of August, 1939, or to Lenin's *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pages 241-262. Lenin's essential point was this: the fundamental distinction about the dictatorship of the proletariat is that it is in no way a dictatorship of a minority over the majority, but precisely the contrary—the "overwhelming majority of the people" enforcing their will upon "a small group . . . of usurpers of the power of the people"—and a dictatorship that "rests on the masses of the people . . . It is a power that is open to all . . . the direct organ of the masses and their will." As we have seen for twenty-two years in the Soviet Union.

In this connection, too, I may draw Mr. Durbin's attention to the well-known passage in the historic Manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919: "the whole of the bourgeois world accuses the Communists of destroying freedom and political democracy. That is not true. In acceding to power the proletariat merely asserts the utter impossibility of applying the methods of bourgeois democracy and creates the condition and forms of a new and higher democracy, that of the working class."

From the same Manifesto I take the classic passage on civil war, answering Mr. Durbin twenty-one years in advance (and, after Spain, more to the point than ever)—

The outcry of the bourgeois world against civil war and Red Terror is the most preposterous hypocrisy known to the history of political struggles. There would be no civil war if the cliques of exploiters who have brought mankind to the brink of ruin did not oppose every forward step of the workers, if they did not instigate plots and murders, if they did not call to their aid armed force from abroad to maintain or restore their predatory privileges. Civil war is forced upon the working class by its arch-enemies. The working class cannot refrain from returning blow for blow, unless it renounces its own interests and sacrifices its future, which is the future of all humanity. The Communist Parties, never artificially fostering civil war, strive to shorten its duration as much as possible, whenever it inexorably breaks out; they endeavour to reduce to the minimum the number of its victims, and above all to ensure the victory of the proletariat.

So much, then, for Mr. Durbin's "mastery of detail." His "moderation of statement" is, when we come to consider his treatment of the Soviet Union, still more remarkable. Many years ago the late Fred Bramley said to the Social Democratic leaders of the International Federation of Trade Unions: "you can discuss any other subject under the sun without getting into that panicky state of trembling fear and excitement and almost savage ferocity which you get into when you are discussing Russian affairs. . . . When you begin to discuss Russia you begin to suffer from some malignant disease"; it is a fair description of Mr. Durbin, whose lurid fantasies would have done well on the "Bolshevik Atrocity" market in its boom days of 1918-19.

Altogether it is an amazing pathological performance. The Soviet and German "terrors" are bracketed, though "apart from the blood purge of 1934 the German régime has been guilty of nothing as bad"—as the trials and executions of the self-confessed enemies of the Soviet people! (p. 25)* "Since Lenin's death . . . there are perpetual reports of executions and mass trials a most every day" (p. 348)—a novel use of the word "a most." There are "practically no Old Guard Bolsheviks left" (p. 349)—only those who occupy the leading positions in the Party and the Government. Radek is put down as executed (p. 350)—when everyone knows he was simply jailed. There are whiskery ones like our old friend of Christian Protest Movement days—"the Russian timber industry is conducted almost entirely by forced labour" (p. 345). Impressive authorities like the Riga correspondent of *The Times* and the *Morning Post* (quoting Kerensky's *Dni*) are solemnly cited. But for the wilder statements not even these are drawn upon; a dogmatic anonymity surrounds such outrageous assertions as that "there is a certain amount of anti-Semitism in Russia; but, except in the Ukraine . . . it is not an official political attitude" (p. 343), accounting for the fact, no doubt, that a Jew from Kiev was one of the principal prizewinners in a recent All-Union drama competition, and for a play in Yiddish at that (as I observe in *Izvestia* of February 21 last).

The heart of the "horror" lies however in—the "cruelty" and *tortures*. Here the evidence is truly sensational, consisting as it does of Eugene Lyons' notorious babblings and "a nameless Russian," writing in the *Sunday Express* (p. 340). That, no more; but it is enough for Mr. Durbin, having had these lunatic lies set down in an Appendix—with certain shufflings and stretchings, even so—to come flat out in the body of the book with positive and unqualified "descriptions" of Soviet "torture" (adding the documentary footnote, "See Appendix I"). It works like this: what somebody told Mr. Lyons was done *in 1931* to valuta speculators is automatically, and with no further evidence, transferred to political prisoners—and Mr. Durbin then takes the whole over, putting it in the present tense, as an accurate description *for 1940*. As he well says in his Introduction, "I begin by the assumption . . . that the methods of science must be used" (p. 27).

After this infamous stuff the reader will hardly be surprised at anything, I imagine. But some representative examples of Mr. Durbin's all-round Philistinism will usefully complete the picture. He runs splendidly true to form. There is not one piece of half-baked academic twaddle that he cannot be relied on to relay. Just the whole works . . . War, for instance—nothing to do with capitalism (p. 40), but all Monkey Hill and the Nursery (p. 44). When "Socialists attribute all disasters, whether economic or political, to 'capitalists'" that is merely anthropological—"animism" (p. 51). Ownership of property is so widely diffused that "the proletariat of the Marxist text book is rapidly disappearing" in Britain and "in America it has disappeared" (pp. 112-3). Monopoly "springs . . . from deliberate democratic will, and not from economic necessity or the wishes of monopolistic minorities" (p. 136*n*). The ills of human society arise from the "dark forces in the human heart," and wealth, health and social equality can "do little . . . without health in the individual mind," the "greater emotional

*I invite Mr. Durbin to ponder the views of some peasant co-operators in Yugoslavia, who when asked their views about the Moscow trials replied: "Our rulers make great propaganda of them. But we are very happy. It shows us that there is a country where big men are punished more severely for their misdeeds than small. Our Minister of War has just been found out stealing public money. He retires, but no one harms him, and the Prince is his friend. But if we steal a few dinars we get years of prison. Over there the small people rule, and traitors in high places get their deserts." (*New Statesman and Nation*, May 13, 1939.)

health " of the individual constituting the " only hope " for social happiness ; the one solution, in short, being—psycho-analysis, " the greatest achievement of the scientific method in this century, and the greatest hope for the future benefit of mankind " (pp. 330-331).

Scratch a Philistine and you always find a jingo ; and the self-satisfaction of Mr. Durbin's British chauvinism is almost beyond belief. Britain discovered " the secret of social peace "—" out of our common happiness we had made a society rich in peace and goodwill " (p. 279)—" despite the fear of aerial bombardment, ours is predominantly an age of quietness and comfort. The standard of living continuously rises about us " (p. 333). There is, however, a blot : " our generation will go down to posterity as one of the most aesthetically destructive in our history. . . . We have torn down some of our finest buildings and we have permitted the speculative builder and the profiteering landlord to drive hideous scars across our countryside " (p. 332)—malnutrition, slums, unemployment also ran, I take it. A man who can write like that is obviously utterly remote from the working class, their lives and struggles ; and indeed they only appear to Mr. Durbin as the Labour Party's election-fodder (" the troops . . . of our peaceful political warfare "), the " diehards," " the main core of party intolerance and unwisdom and intransigence " (p. 289), who prevent the programme being too much watered down, since " the support of these people must be retained " (*ibid*). Yes, *these people* ! No wonder there is a sigh of relief in Mr. Durbin's voice when he says, of the General Strike of 1926, " happily we survived that *dangerous experience* without social disaster " (p. 22) (*my italics*).

I conclude : the space I have taken would have been superfluous if this intellectual mannikin were not produced by Transport House as their Great Democratic Socialist Thinker—to erect a " theory " to justify the Chamberlain-Daladier liquidation of democracy and to whip up lynch-feeling against the one Socialist country in the world. That they can do no better than this is a remarkable sign of their political bankruptcy.

ALLEN HUTT.

SHORTER NOTICE

Russia, Finland and the Baltic by W. P. and Zelda K. Coates. (Lawrence & Wishart. 1s.).

THE GREAT THING about the Coates is that they always have just the right newspaper cutting at their finger-tips; and, as in all the books and brochures on Soviet affairs, home and foreign, which have made their name, the documentation of this most topical work is admirable. The facts of Anglo-French intervention through the Baltic twenty years ago should be studied by everyone. So should the exposure here given of the realities of power in Tannerheim Finland—the effective domination of the State by the counter-revolutionary Civic Guard and the jingo militarist cliques. Adding notably to the booklet's value is the detailed account of the U.S.S.R.'s agreements with Latvia, Esthonia and Lithuania.

LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

						£	s.	d.
Previously Acknowledged	..	..	..	..	..	20	11	10
M.P. ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
W. O'D.P. ..	..	..	..	..	..	0	13	0
Conscript ..	..	..	..	..	..	0	2	6
Left Book Club, Pretoria	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
S.S. ..	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
Michael Sheppard	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
E.C.R. ..	..	..	..	..	..	5	0	0
M.F.A.P. ..	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
R.F.B. ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
D. A. J. Smith	..	..	..	..	..	0	1	10
Dr. Joan Garrett	..	..	..	..	..	5	0	0
Hampstead Garden Suburb "L.M." Discussion Group	..	..	..	..	..	0	9	0
Arabian Supporter	..	..	..	..	..	0	5	0
TOTAL ..						£34	19	2

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Tuberculosis and Social Conditions in England.* P. d'Arcy Hart and G. Payling Wright. (National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.) 3s. 165 pp.
- The Unemployment Services.* Polly Hill. (Routledge.) 7s. 6d. 226 pp.
- Industrial Law.* H. Samuels. (Pitman.) 15s. 249 pp.
- Uncensored Germany.* (Sidgwick and Jackson.) 3s. 6d. 108 pp.
- War and the Workers.* V. I. Lenin. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 6d. 39 pp.
- The Politics of Democratic Socialism.* E. F. M. Durbin. (Routledge.) 7s. 6d. 384 pp.
- The Crank.* Arthur Ponsonby. (Allen and Unwin.) 1s. 48 pp.
- The Substance of Economics.* H. A. Silverman. (Pitman.) 6s. 6d. 371 pp.
- The Autobiography of a German Rebel.* Toni Sender. (Routledge.) 7s. 6d. 305 pp.
- A Welsh Heretic.* T. Islwyn Nicholas. (Foyle's Welsh Co.) 6d. 48 pp.
- The Keynes Plan.* (Labour Research Department.) 1d. 16 pp.
- The Stockmarket, Credit and Capital Formation.* Fritz Machlup. (Hodge.) 21s. 416 pp.
- Ten Lean Years.* Wal Hannington. (Gollancz.) 7s. 6d. 287 pp.
- What is Happening in Finland.* I. Eriksson. (Modern Books.) 4d. 48 pp.
- The Case for Czech Freedom.* (Anti-Fascist Relief Committee.) 2d. 15 pp.

Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices :

43 MUSEUM STREET,

New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1

Telephone : HOLBORN 6656

The Editor of The *Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions.

The articles in The *Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

WHOLESALE :

The *Labour Monthly* is obtainable wholesale from W. H. Smith & Son Ltd., Portugal Street, London, W.C.2, and most other wholesalers.

Registered for transmission by second-class mail to Canada.

BY POST

The Labour Monthly

BRITISH ISLES :

Six months	..	..	..	3s. 6d. post free
Twelve months	..	..	..	7s. od. „

ABROAD :

One year	..	..	..	8s. od. or \$2.00
Six months	..	..	..	4s. od. or \$1.00

DIRECT SERVICE—PRINTER TO READER

Ideas

SUGGESTIONS

..... for Magazines, Booklets, Pamphlets and all kinds of Printing for Groups, Guilds, Associations, etc., our Layout and Production department are here to advise and help you. Consult our Ideas department on how best to put your message into print ; our Typographical department for the most attractive designs. Send us your enquiries. Ask for dummy specimens. We are here to help you on all matters relating to GOOD PRINTING.



**LEICESTER CO-OPERATIVE
PRINTING SOCIETY LTD.**

19 CHURCH GATE, LEICESTER

Telephone 2224

Printed and Published by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 19 Church Gate, Leicester.
Typeset by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 19 Church Gate, Leicester.